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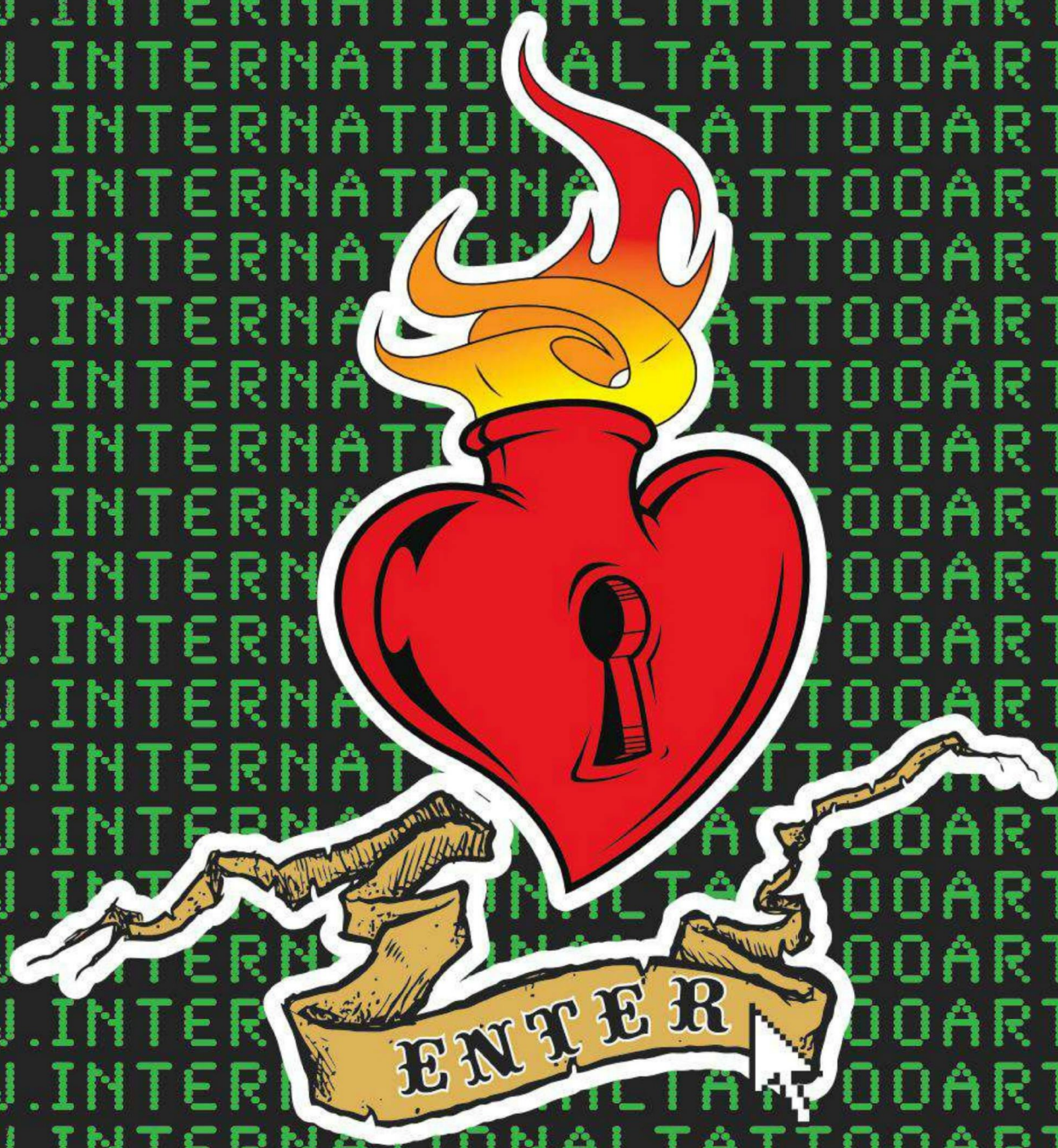
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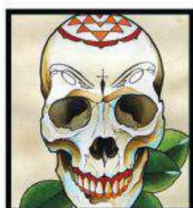
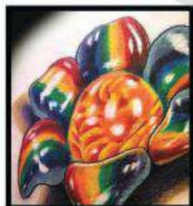
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contents

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- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4 | editor's note | out in the deep end |
| 6 | Letters to the editor | bagged and sometimes tagged |
| 8 | classical gas | JOEL CONROY |
| 18 | a wonder DOWN UNDER | JUSTIN ACCA |
| 32 | a mystery from HISTORY | what is the thing? |
| 34 | SHIFT CITY PORTRAITS | DAN STEWART |
| 46 | tattoos saved HIS SOUL | BETO MUNOZ |
| 64 | tattoos AROUND THE GLOBE | the rest of the best |

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Cover Photo of Leah Jung by Bill DeMichele
Tattoos by Various Artists

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editorial

BACKSTROKING AROUND IN THE TALENT POOL

America is, without any question, the biggest, most ingenious and creative pool of universal R&D the world has ever seen. R&D, that's research and development, if you don't know.

On any and every front, artistic and industrial, Americans step up to the plate and bang it out of the park. We always have. If there isn't a park, we build one, then build a plate and step up to it, the better to be banging it out of the aforementioned.

I pick up hot rod magazines and wonder what Henry Ford would think about the changes Americans have made to his Model A (produced from 1928-1931). Powerplants from lawnmower engines to rockets have been installed in the little A-bomb buggies. They've been used to race every kind of motor contest there is, worldwide. Style-wise the Model A car in all its various shapes—roadsters, coupes, sedans, etc.—is kind of a brick looking affair. Be that as it may, Model A Fords have been used to look cool, go fast, go far, handle reliably, and, for all I know, leap tall buildings and spew out a couple dozen clowns under the big top. Today, you can buy every part necessary to build a complete Model A car, down to the correct nuts, bolts and zerk. Just pick your year and body style and whip out the checkbook.

What would Henry Ford think of all that, 80 years on?

Impressive as the Model A Ford situation is, it pales against the free R&D that Harley-Davidson gets, year in and year out, gratis, without asking, whether they like it or not. Everything Harley puts on the streets is pulled apart and examined, beefed up, cut down and improved in a dozen ways by some of the best minds on the planet.

For decades, it seemed, H-D just wanted to build fat road bikes with as little yearly improvement as possible. And they really hated the choppers and customs that were roaring down every public thoroughfare in the land. Meanwhile, the custom guys were using revolutionary new styling and paints, installing transmissions with one more gear than the factory product, transmitting power via belts instead of chains, using fuel injection, turbos and blowers. The resemblance was like a crop duster compared to a stealth fighter.

Eventually even H-D couldn't ignore the rising tides and they began ever so timidly to sell "factory custom" motorcycles. I always thought they were uglier than month-old roadkill but the public liked them and they sold very well.

Kicking and screaming, Harley slowly began to give the public what it wanted. All courtesy of the biggest free R&D department in the world: The American public.

Whether it's broke or not, we fix it. Or at least chrome-plate it so it looks better. And, no matter what, the quest for a better mousetrap goes on. And in that sense, the better mousetrap sense, Americans have always rocked the world.

And even more to the point, American inventors have never stopped trying not only to build the better mousetrap, but also to put it in the hands of Everyman.

A good day of rooting around in old magazines shows this off loud and clear. In the 1920s, the future of aviation was completely unclear. It was possible that everyone might own an airplane the same way we have come to own cars—and there were popular aviation magazines that catered to guys who expected that to happen and wanted to get

ahead of the crowd. There were projects spread over 10 or 12 issues showing you how to build a complete plane, engine and all. In the place where worlds collide, there was a semi-famous build-it-yourself aircraft engine called the Harlequin that was designed around circa 1929 stock H-D cylinders.

Those same types of people exist today. At least, there are plenty of people who want to build their own planes in their own garages, and there are industries to help them build ultralights in the garage. Aircraft for the average Joe and Josephine.

In the '60s I used to say that the days when a guy with a decent mechanical sense and affordable tools was pretty much out of the invention game. I was wrong, although not completely. The scene was way downhill from what it had been 20 years before that, but it was not as dead as I said. And my view was probably very distorted. The

only window I had into the 1940s was through magazines. Popular Mechanics, and those sorts of titles, made a lot of industries look wide open, industries and opportunities that were shut tight by the 1960s.

Then again, I've also been known to have a dim view of things like that. If you had come to me in the early days of telephones and said we're going to put wires all over the nation and link up every house with every other house I'd have definitely said you were full of it.

Computers changed what had dragged in the '60s, and then the '70s. I don't understand them but plenty of people do, and they're out there building fighting bots and all kinds of other widgets. I've seen instructions on how to build your own Segue vehicle. It requires two computer modules and a good deal

of brainpower.


In tattooing, like every other endeavor, Americans have stepped up to the plate and jolted the bean out of the park, right over the Green Monster, and any other monster they run across.

America has given the world a strong visual language specific to tattooing. It's direct and powerful and generally leaves little to the imagination of the viewer. The style called Traditional American is built completely around this core. The images have been honed and shaped by hundreds of tattooers to a sharp, rarefied hub, with a constellation of living images that communicate their meaning instantly.

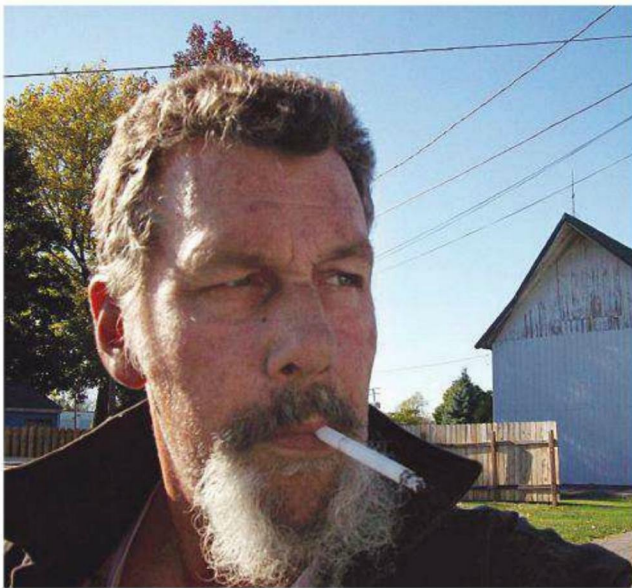
And, of course, the first technical advancement besides capacitors in the last hundred-plus years, the Neuma air-driven tattoo machine, was invented by an American named Carson Hill.

This magazine is named International Tattoo Art—and the talent pool around the world that is currently involved in tattooing is truly staggering. Month after month we try to feature artists from other countries as well as America.

It's a beautiful world and I firmly believe that tattoos contribute to keeping it beautiful in many ways. Americans continue to contribute to that beauty in a big way.

It's a good time to do your part and get tattooed. Tell your artist, in whatever country you are in, that I sent you. 

—Chris Pfouts
Editor



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letters to the editor

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**“WITH THE MOST PRIMITIVE MEANS THE ARTIST CREATES
SOMETHING WHICH THE MOST INGENUOUS AND EFFICIENT
TECHNOLOGY WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO CREATE.”**

—kasimir malevich

NO, NOT PARIS

I'm looking for the issue of ITA with Levi Hilton in it. Please send me a copy, I'll pay you. I can't find it.

--Dale Tully
Via E-mail

It was July, 2011. We'll see if we can't get you hooked up through our back issues department.

BARNYARD LOVE

A while back you did a killer profile of a guy named something like Goose. I'm sorry I can't remember. I do know he was in beautiful San Antonio, Texas, where I am, and his work absolutely kicked ass. But I can't call around to studios looking for a guy whose name I can't even remember. Getting old sucks, let me tell you. You get so you can't remember names, to start with, and then you can't remember faces, either.

--Bennett Christensen
Via E-mail

It was Rooster, son. Rooster is the

name. We do know a Goose, but you sure wouldn't want him tattooing you. Rooster, however, does a killer job and you can find him at Prick Tattoos on Starcrest Drive, or on the limitless, wondrous Internet at www.pricktattoos.com. Without a doubt there is a Facebook page as well.

LEATHERNECK ART

Back in your December, 2011, issue you had a really cool magazine cover from 1944, Leatherneck Magazine, straight out of WW2. The Marines were fighting in the South Pacific in those days, mainly, as I understand it. World War 2 was really dragging on. The picture of the old lifer cook with his tattoos and the young kid was great. It can be kinda funny if you want to look at it with the right mindset, but basically it's a really fantastic, slice-of-life piece of tattoo art from another time. I'd tell you to go out and find more stuff like that, but I'm sure you try as hard as you can and it's not like that stuff grows on trees.

So keep up the good work. You lay it down and we'll be out here to pick it up.

--Simon The Whisky Man
Via E-mail

CONSTANT QUALITY

When I first got interested in tattooing about five years ago a friend of mine told me ITA was the best tattoo magazine around. He died in a car crash a couple years back, which was very sad. He was a pretty wise cat; he knew a lot of things about a lot of things. The advice about ITA was not the smartest thing he ever told me but it was smart. And ITA continues to be the best, as far as I'm concerned. There's no nonsense about rappers, no technical stuff about machines, and basically no bullshit. Just stories about artists and the art they produce. Which is all I care about. I like that you let the art do the talking. Because in the end, fifty years from now or whatever, all the talk will just be that much long-gone stale air. While the tattoos will still be here.

--Mark Wallace
Via E-mail

WHEN MILLAR RULED THE COMIC PAGES

The Pete Millar story was very nice. I'm not so familiar with Millar, so it was very educational for me, too. I have actually never had my hands on any of those old CarToons magazines. I guess I have to buy one on eBay someday.

The story about how his ashes were spread was really neat. What a way to leave this world. :) When I die, I want some of my ashes mixed in the fuel of my Tucker, and then have it spread around while the car is being cruised.

So yeah, I have some cars, too. My big pride right now is a 1949 Chevrolet Club Coupe that was restyled by Barris Kustoms in the mid-1950s.

--Sondre
Oslo, Norway
Kustomrama Traditional Rod
& Kustom
www.kustomrama.com

We ran that Millar story back in the summer of 2009. It got pretty good feedback. Not enough people are familiar with Millar's work, the way I see it. His nephew went out and got a tattoo of one of his illustrations almost immediately after that story ran. Glad you liked it, anyway. In the spirit of right back atcha, I like Kustomrama, too.

--Chris Pfouts

SLIPPING INTO THE PAGES

I have been an avid reader and follower of ITA for some time now and love nothing more than to read into and develop my knowledge of a community that I love through your medium. I was interested in what processes and procedures a reader would have to demonstrate for yourself to write a small section on a particular artist. Coming from a similar industry as yourself I understand that questions like these are asked as much as the blink of an eye, however it would be great if perhaps I could send you across some information and images for you to perhaps glance over and perhaps take into consideration. I myself am not a tattoo artist so please do not think that I am trying to get a foot into the door or ask for favors. I am sending

this e-mail with the grace that the artist who I wish to put forward will see that her hard work here in Ireland does not go unnoticed. Thanks again for taking the time to read this and I look forward to hearing from you.

--Oliver Isaac
Via E-mail

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number is also helpful. Just throwing a piece of paper with the name on it into the envelope is not sufficient. Please just use the regular drugstore 4" x 6" size. Going bigger is just more expensive for you and a pain in the neck for us.

If you need to be certain that the package arrived, use the U.S. Post Office's Delivery Confirmation system. They attach a green sticker to the item and you can check its status online. Or ship FedEx or UPS. Because of the volume of mail we receive we cannot answer questions about an individual package either by phone or online.

Finally—we ask that you send us exclusive photographs. If you're sending the work to other places at the same time, we'd rather not get it. Our leadtime is long—we work as much as five months ahead of the cover date, so be patient.

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THE ELECTRIC HOMEBOY

JOEL CONROY'S ART ROUTINE

By Amanda Stephan

JOEL CONROY GAVE HIS HEART TO TATTOOING WHEN HE WAS 16. HE HAD JUST STARTED TO GET TATTOOED

on a regular basis—a result of the insecurities he felt as an uncomfortable teenager. Conroy was collecting tattoos, he says, in an effort to obtain a sense of self worth.

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Conroy moved frequently throughout his childhood. Eventually he moved to Ottawa for school but felt disconnected from his fellow students. He also dreaded his shifts at the factory where he worked when he wasn't in school. Conroy began hanging around a local tattoo shop on the weekends and was soon bugging the owner for a job. "I dreamt about working in an environment like that," he said. "As soon as I started, nothing else seemed to matter. I still eat, sleep and breathe tattooing and in my life it comes before anything else. If I didn't have something that required this much of me, I'm sure boredom would set in. That idle time seems to create danger in my life. If it wasn't for tattooing I'd be dead."

Outside of art, Conroy enjoys observing people, which he says enables him to discern what it is that he most admires in a person. One character trait that Conroy values most is a solid work ethic. He respects those who do what they love for the love of it alone, not for some eventual payout.



JOEL CONROY



The individuals who have earned Conroy's respect include musicians, writers, artists, and skateboarders. Specifically he admires Henry Rollins, Robert Crumb, Townes Van Zandt, Gustave Doré, Daniel Johnston, and Leonard Cohen. There are, of course, a number of tattoo artists who have Conroy's respect. Their influence on him extends beyond their work ethic. One such artist is Bill Baker, who Conroy praises for his effort to understand the scientific elements of tattooing. Craig Driscoll is another tattooist whom Conroy admires. "His natural ability made my jaw drop when I first looked through his portfolio," he said. "I didn't know stuff like that was possible until I saw him do it." He also appreciates Dave Cummings' ability to consistently execute impeccable large-scale work and the work of Wayne Murrill and Dan Higgs.

Conroy has frequent contact with another artist he greatly admires: Julien Garner, owner of Five Cents Tattoo. "Garner [is] a very compassionate guy, although you wouldn't know it by the looks of him," Conroy said. "He has a wealth of knowledge sitting atop those shoulders of his and I've barely tapped into it. But I will. I'm lucky I'm there and happy that my path in life has brought me there."

Artwise, Joel Conroy doesn't attempt to label what he is doing with tattoos. He realizes that what he attempts to convey in a tattoo might not be interpreted as it was intended. There is certainly some part of himself that comes across in every tattoo, and his mood or general state of being is always reflected in his work. He does, however, have an inclination toward traditional tattooing.

"The people who do traditional style work all do it a little different; it's those differences that I appreciate," he said. "The aesthetic of traditional is timeless to me. I do really love Japanese stuff, too, and how it's designed to have the bigger picture in mind. It's the most appealing to me if you're talking about full-body coverage."

JOEL CONROY



**"IF IT WASN'T FOR
TATTOOING, I'D BE DEAD."
—JOEL CONROY**




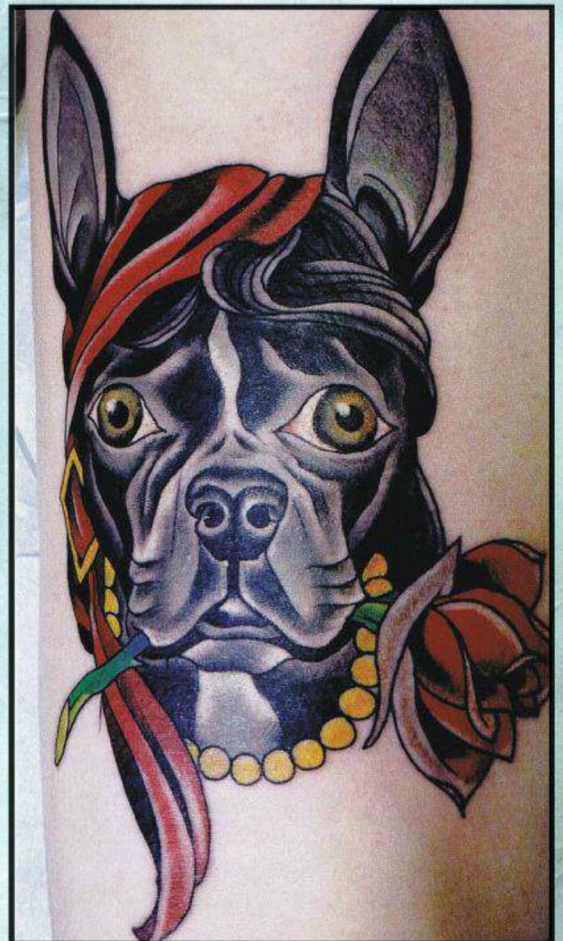
JOEL CONROY



It's safe to classify Joel Conroy as a creature of habit. He has found a comfort zone through which he can explore himself and his art. For this reason, he usually avoids tattoo conventions and prefers to work at his home base. "I don't know how many conventions I'll do in the future," he said. "Conventions are hard for me. They're uncomfortable and create anxiety and it's hard for me to stay focused. Routine calms me and allows me to focus on the task at hand. I'm aware of my weaknesses and if I don't think I can do something to the best of my ability in an overwhelming environment then why put myself there?" Conroy does, however, enjoy working in the occasional guest spot. He has found several studios that present him with a comfortable work environment and the opportunity to engage with friends. His usual haunts are Thrive Studios in Cambridge, Ontario, and Government Street Tattoo in Victoria, British Columbia.

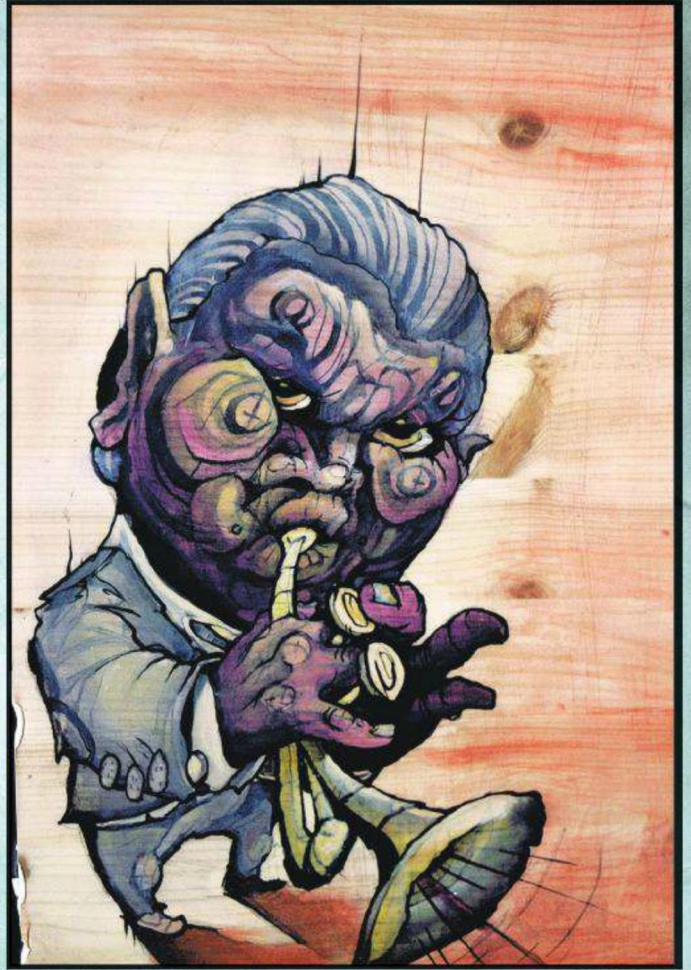
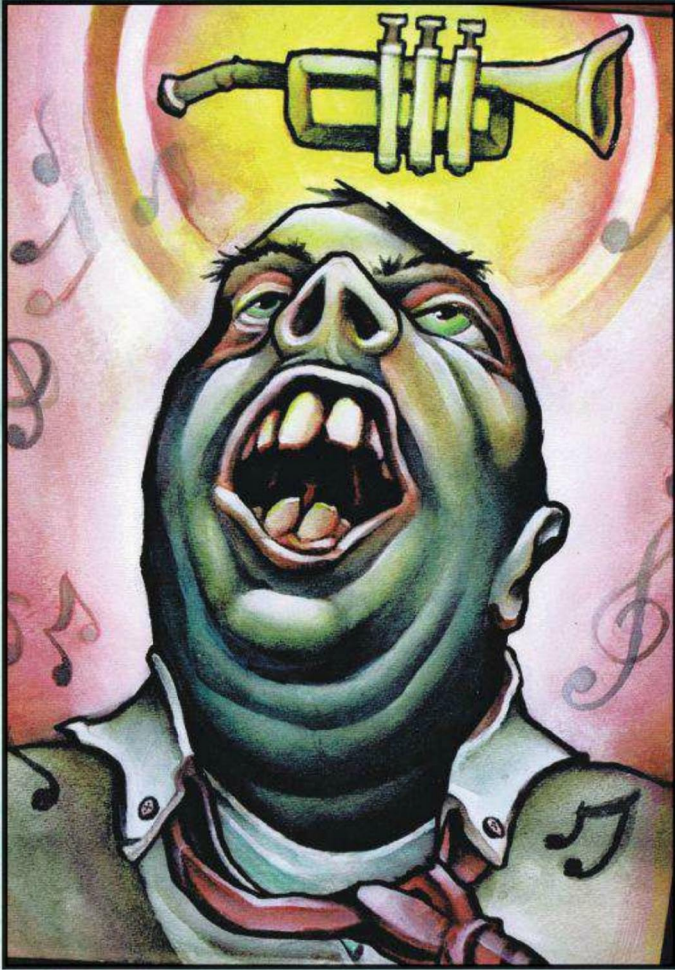
Conroy has found his niche and he plans on staying in it for as long as possible. When he envisions his future Conroy sees himself, "sitting on my fat ass doing a painting talking to someone else about how much I love tattooing," he said. "If I can do this until I drop dead, I will."

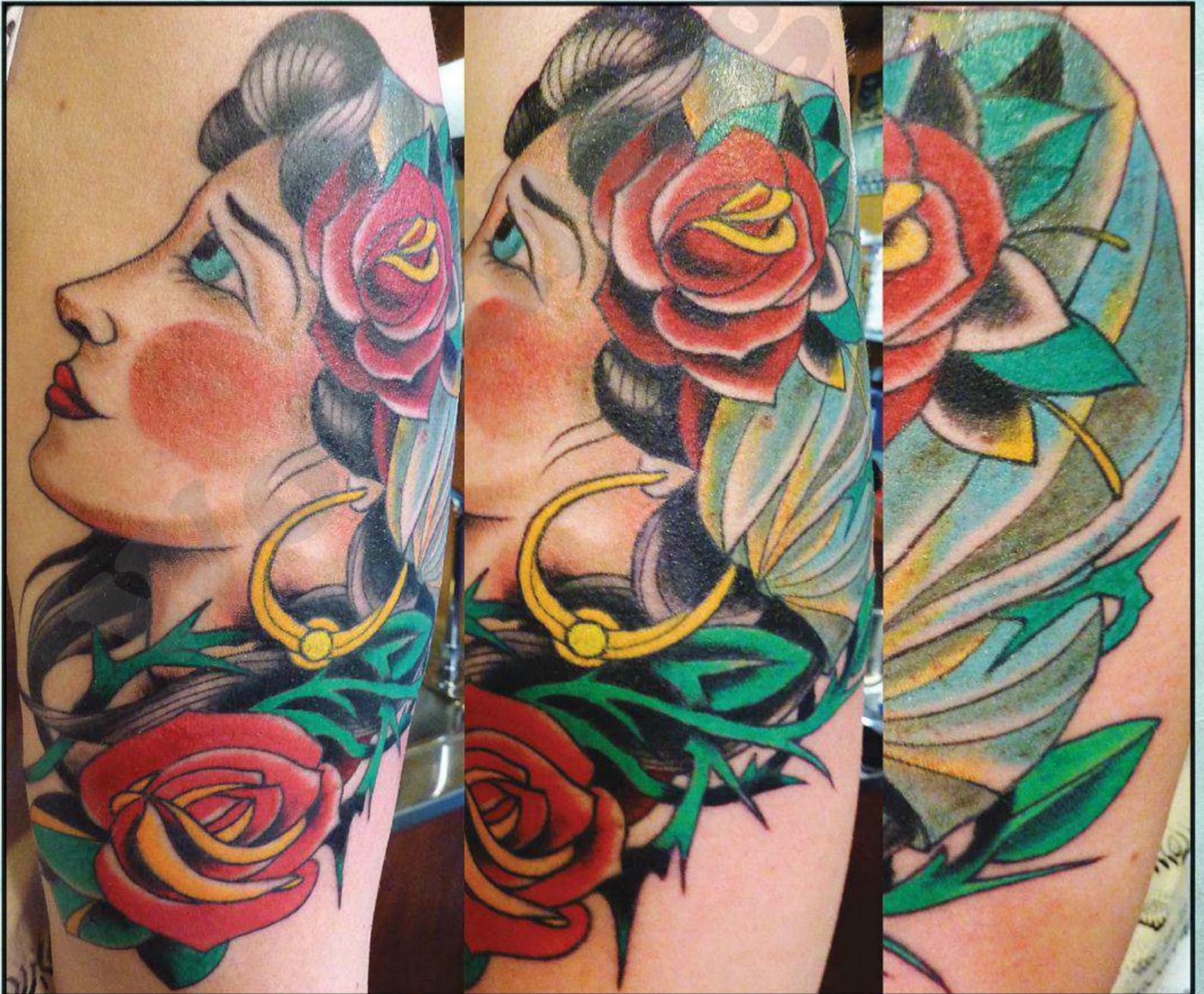
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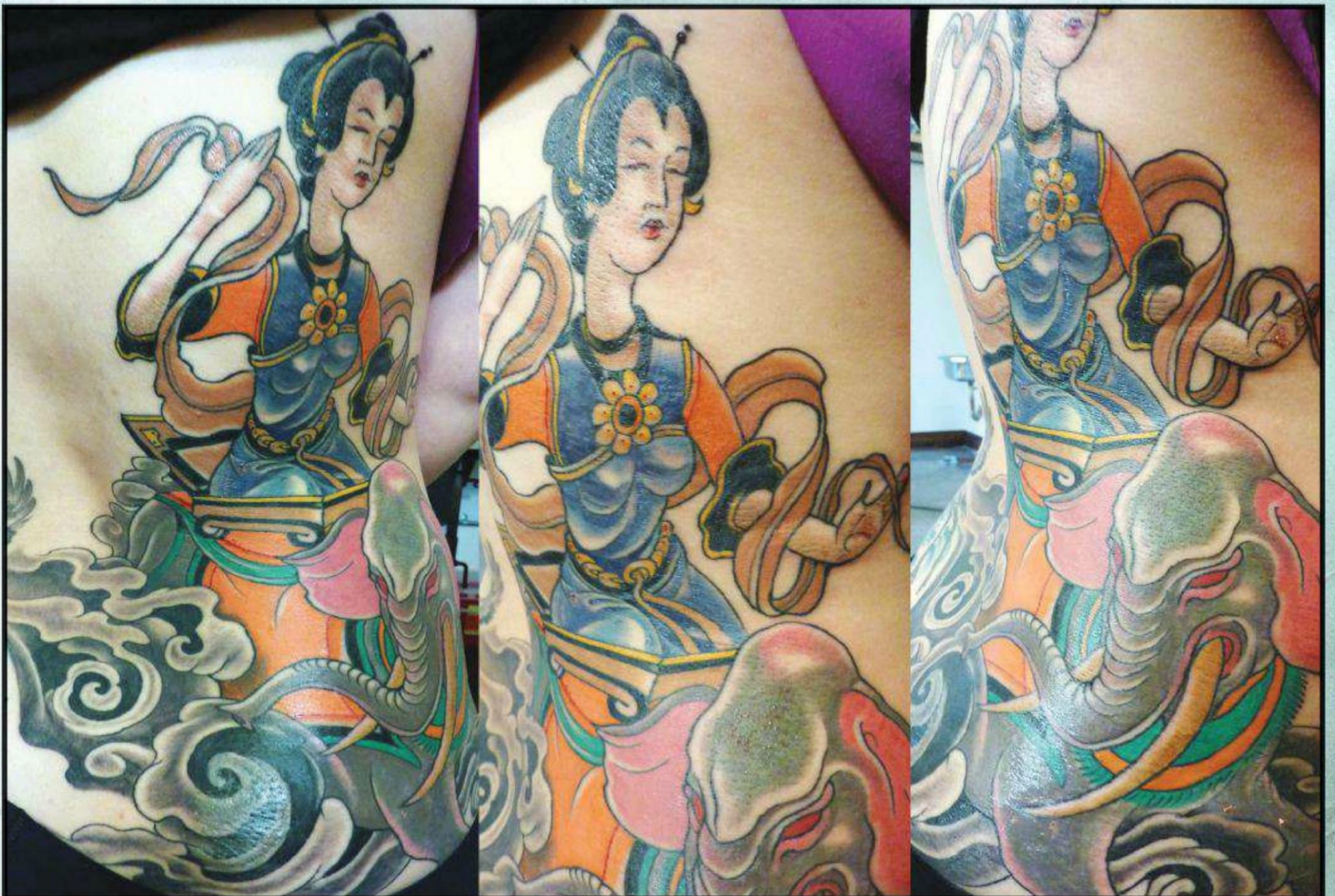


JOEL CONROY

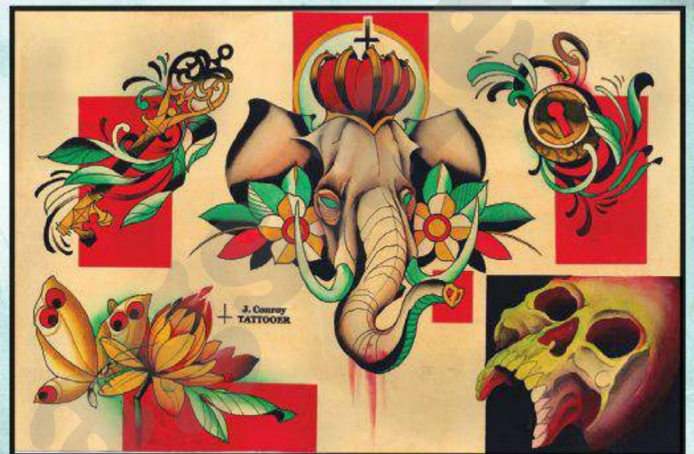
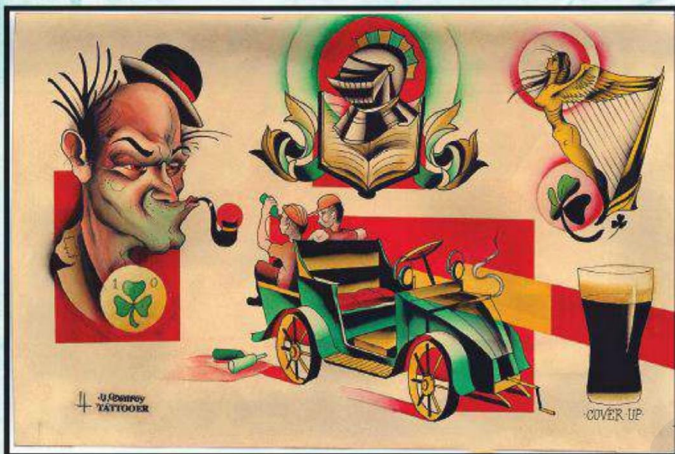








JOEL CONROY





HIT THE DECK:

Aussie Artist Justin Acca

By Amanda Stephan

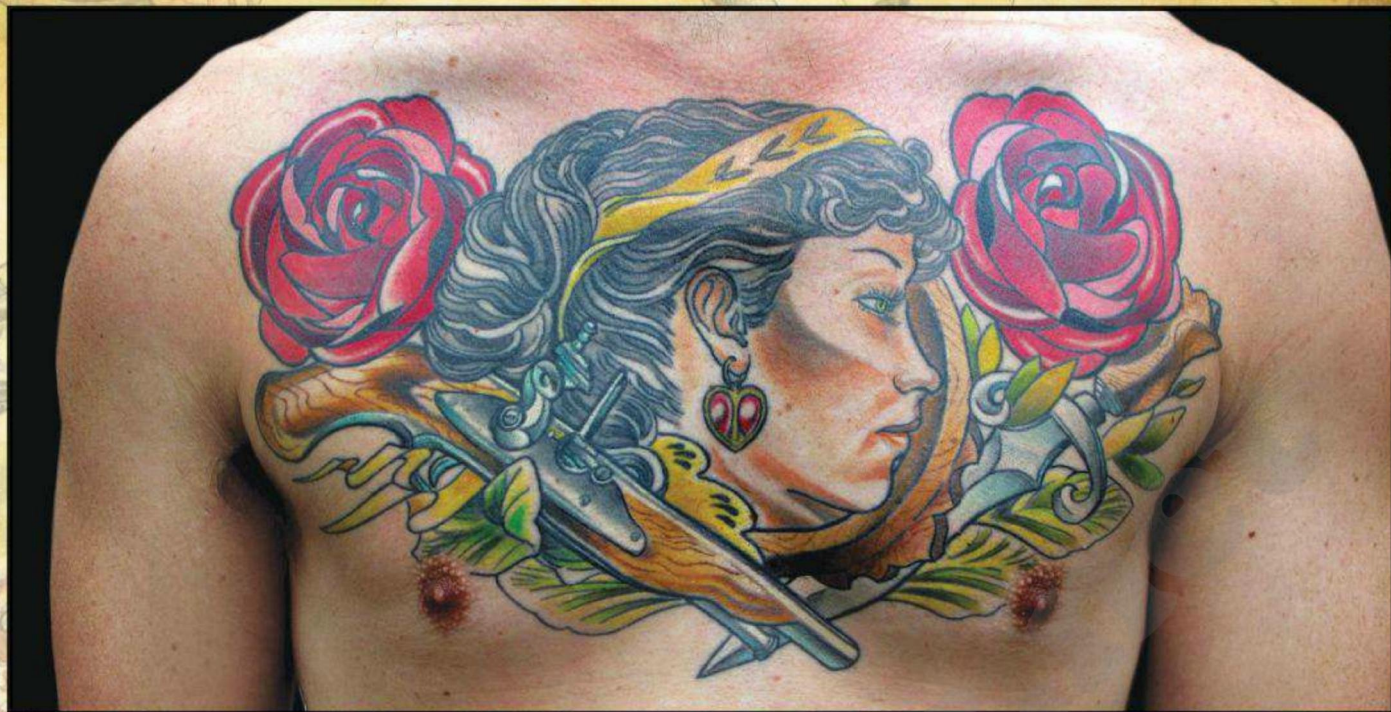
JUSTIN ACCA HAS NEVER BEEN A CIRCUS PERFORMER, NEVER JUGGLED KNIVES,

and can't play any musical instruments. There are, however, two things in which Acca has demonstrated his skill: creating art and skateboarding. As a child, Acca developed an interest in skateboarding and he maintained this interest until he discovered tattooing. It was 1998 when Acca unearthed his talent in tattooing, and he has continued to develop as an artist for the last 14 years.

In the thriving metropolis of Melbourne, Australia, Acca is a standout tattooist, catering to his clientele at Devil's Ink Tattoo Melbourne at Newport. "Melbourne is a busy city, culturally, socially and artistically," he said. "It's where, arguably, most of the action is in Australia. So here I still am."

Acca's earlier years in Melbourne were spent skateboarding and he polished his knack for it. Not quite achieving professional success, he had struggled to find his place in the adult world of gainful employment. Acca dabbled in art when he wasn't skateboarding and even attended the Victorian College of the Arts, majoring in Fine Arts and Drawing. This proved to be an unfulfilling avenue. "My drawing teacher was asking me for advice, so I kind of thought the course was pointless," he said. "At the time it seemed delusional to think there was a job at the end of it. It was more about techniques of illustration and studying the Old Masters."

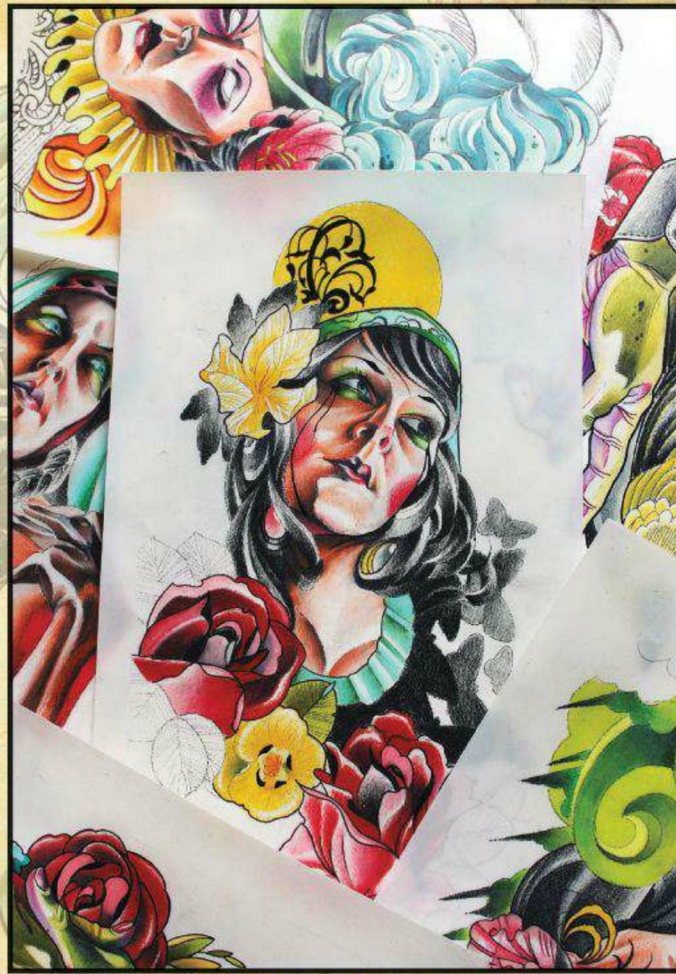
Acca's artistic studies weren't a complete failure, though. "I did particularly like doing life drawing," he said, "working especially with line drawings. I found my greatest strength was to draw from objects, a skill which I still use to this day."



**"THEY MIGHT SNATCH THE PEBBLE
FROM MY HAND WHEN THEY'RE
TEENAGERS." — JUSTIN ACCA**



JUSTIN ACCA



Even after the disappointment of art school, Acca didn't give up on the idea of schooling that was associated with art. "I completed a computer graphics course," he said, "which helped my compositions for tattoos. I guess I'm self-taught in art to a point."

Before settling into his life as a tattoo artist, Acca leaned toward a computer graphics career. At another point, he spent time as a welder and used his skills to construct sculptures.

It wasn't until a girlfriend presented Acca with a tattoo machine as a birthday gift that his career in tattooing began. He caught a lucky break and found a job at a local tattoo studio. "Over the years I watched tattooing grow into a more advanced art form," he said. "It was kind of crude when I started out, horrible flash and such, leaving little inspiration. Once custom work became public understanding, I began to return to having freedom in my artistic skills. At that point I knew tattooing was right for me, in terms of my being able to express and explore my love of art and creating, within the tattoo medium."

In creating his art, Acca often adheres to what he describes as the neo-classic look. He's begun to appreciate well-constructed, traditionally influenced tattoos. Acca describes going through a period where he crafted many tattoo designs with Victorian ladies. There was another time that his female figures explored a Day of the Dead theme. Currently, he's using 1940s and 1950s women's faces. He's also been using a lot of bird species in his sleeves. "In my work, I'm trying to cull down color and add in more black and grey contrasts throughout the pieces," he said. "The design work I do has an illustrative feel with a definite individual

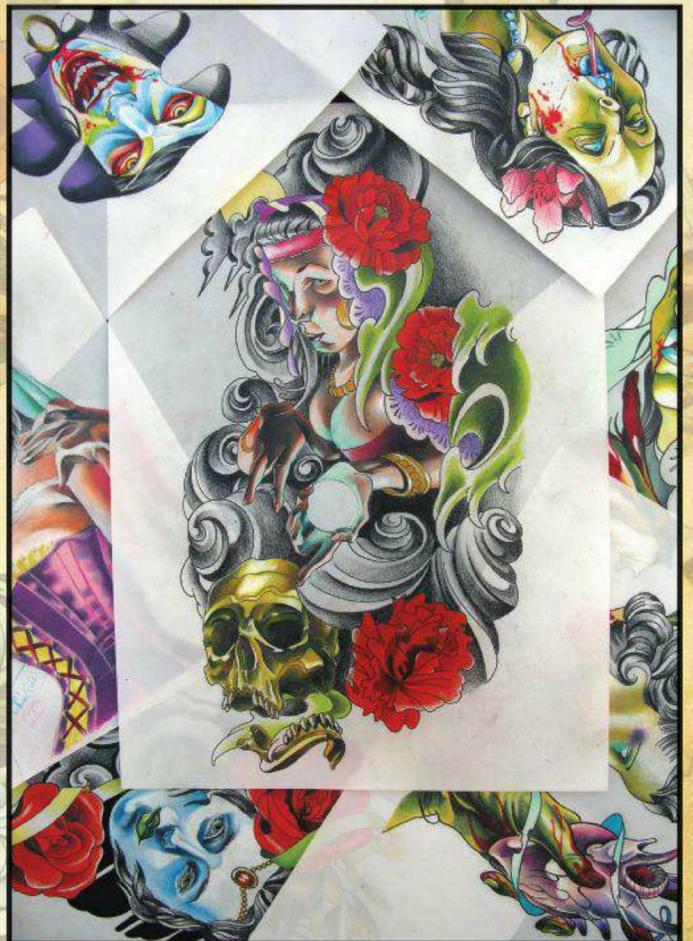
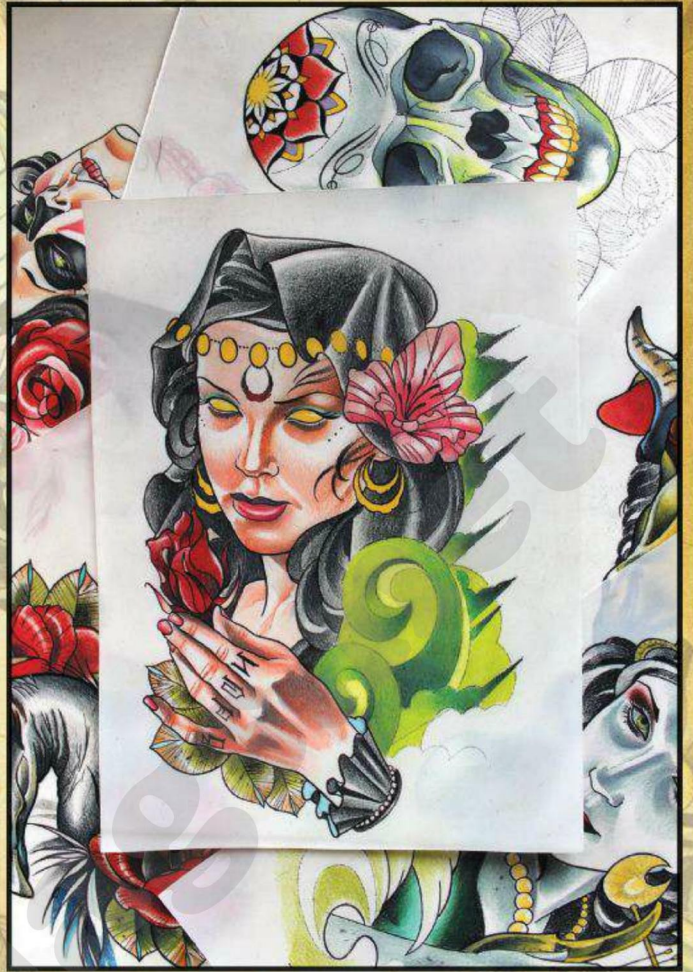
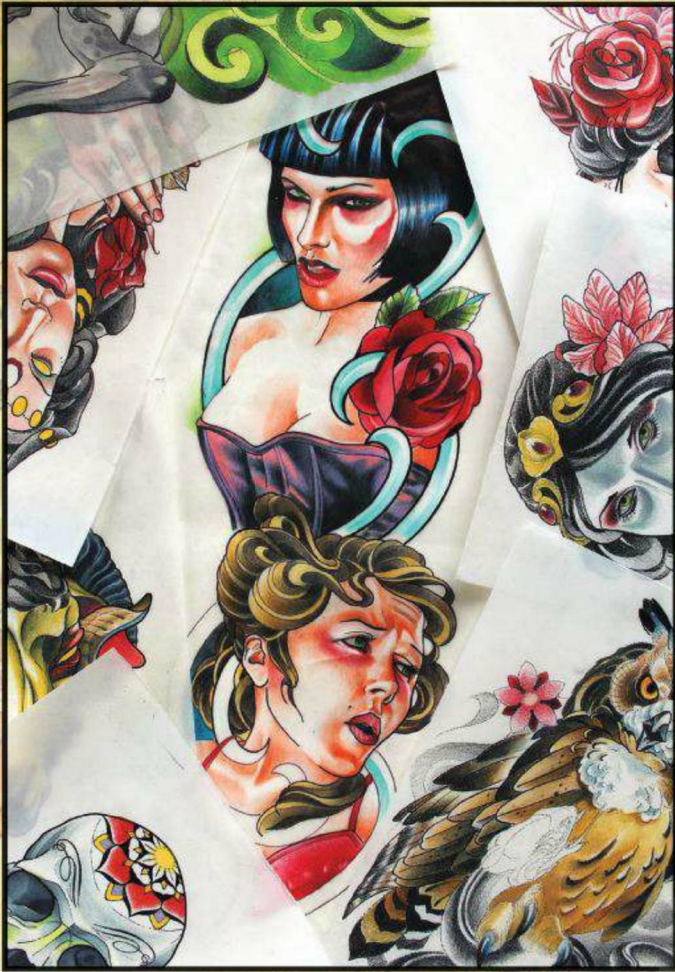
style, I guess, especially in line description. I trained myself for a long time in illustrating with line to show form, along with using no fill or color. I guess it comes from my love of illustrators from the past."

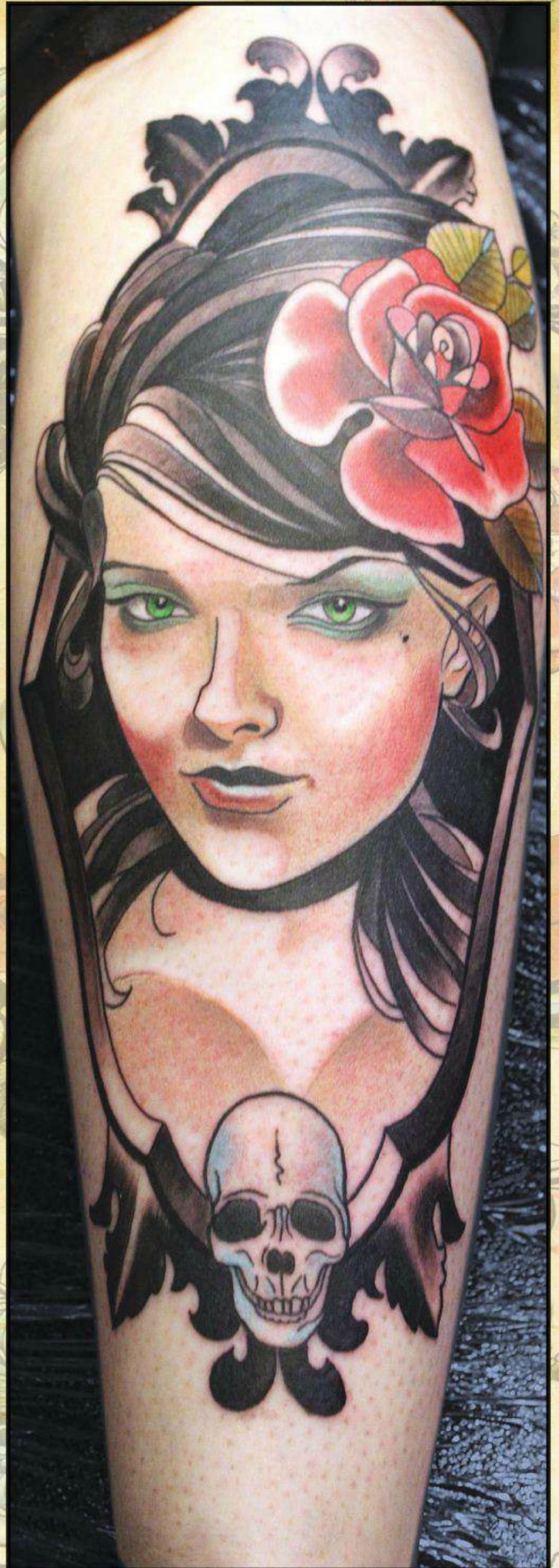
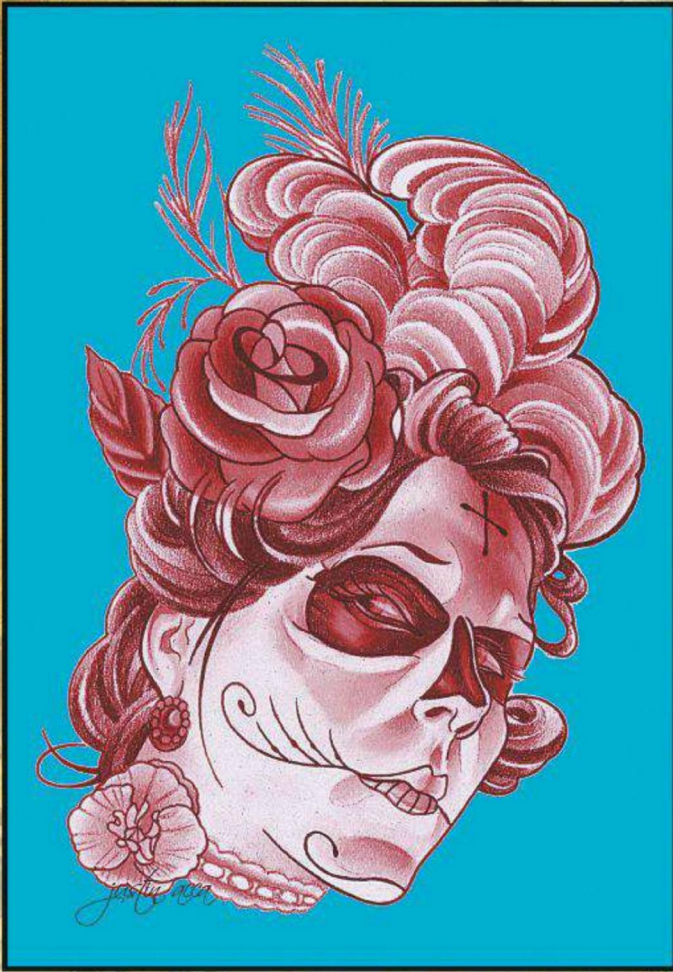
One of Acca's greatest influences is Privat Livemont, a figure from the Art Nouveau period. English fine artist Ron Embleton is another who has influenced Acca's art. He tries not to be heavily influenced by fellow tattooists, however. Acca is not a fan of images being passed around and repeated without any evolution. "Although it is good to be inspired by others, I'm trying to keep my own vision," he said.

In addition to tattoos, Acca's artwork is appearing on surfboards. He's a featured artist for Artboardz.com. "Seeing my art that large-scale and on a board is something I dreamed I'd see when I was riding my skateboards twenty years ago," he said.

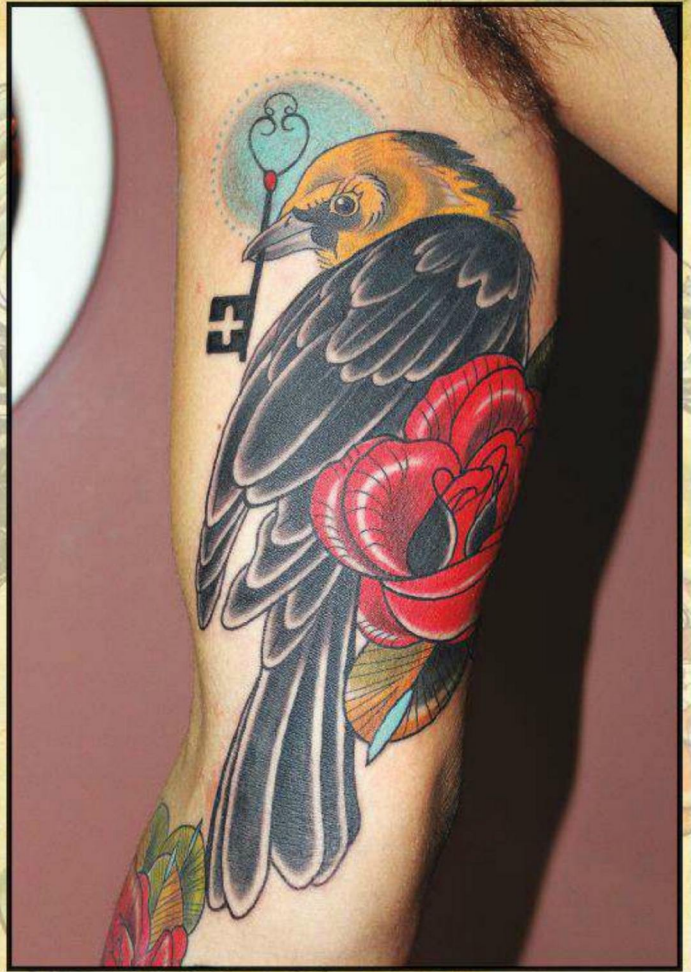
Acca's greatest source of pride, however, is his role as a father. His two sons share his interest in art and have also revitalized his love of skateboarding. "I guess being a dad to two boys who are at the age where they are starting to skate has helped get me back on the board, though being the oldest dude at a skate park banging out some rusty moves is slightly strange," he said. "Also, my kids are shaping up their artistic skills by painting all my outline drawings in that I bring home from work. They can draw pretty rad for a 3- and a 6-year-old, too. They might snatch the pebble from my hand when they're teenagers."

Stay current with Justin Acca's activities by visiting his blog at www.justinacca.blogspot.com or at Devil's Ink Tattoo's website, www.devilsinktattoo.com. 

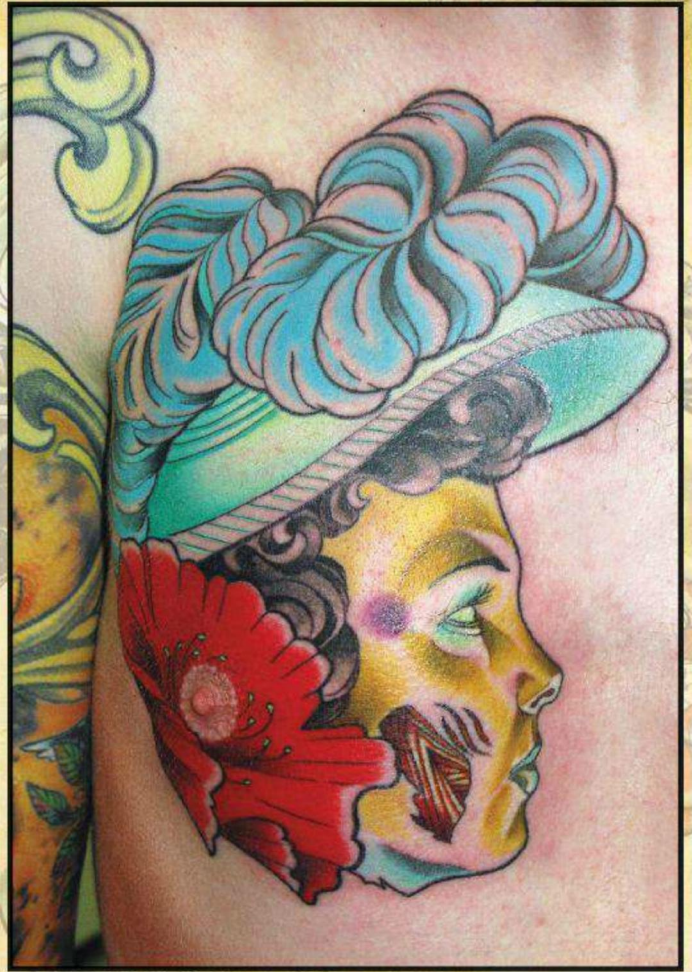


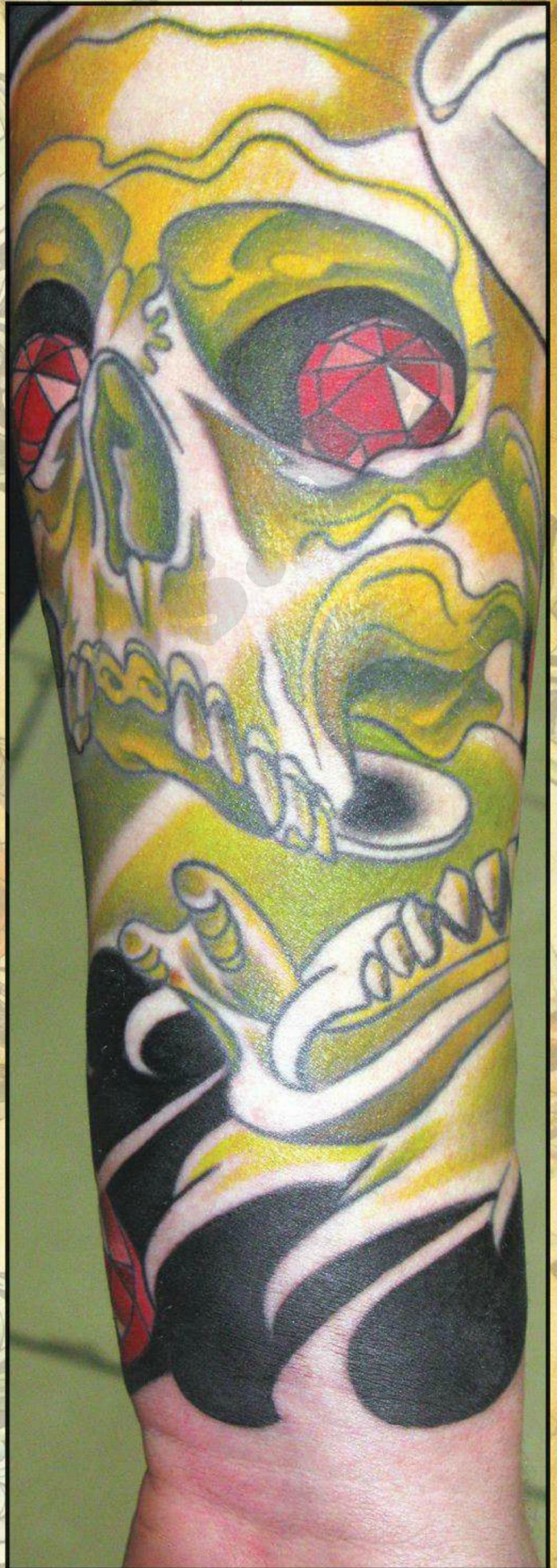


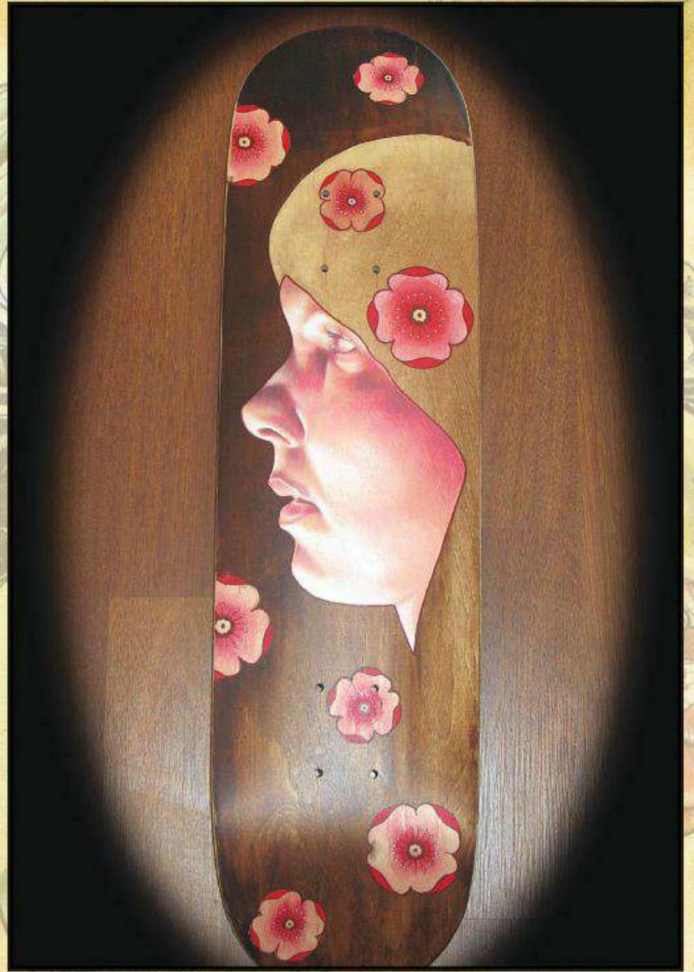


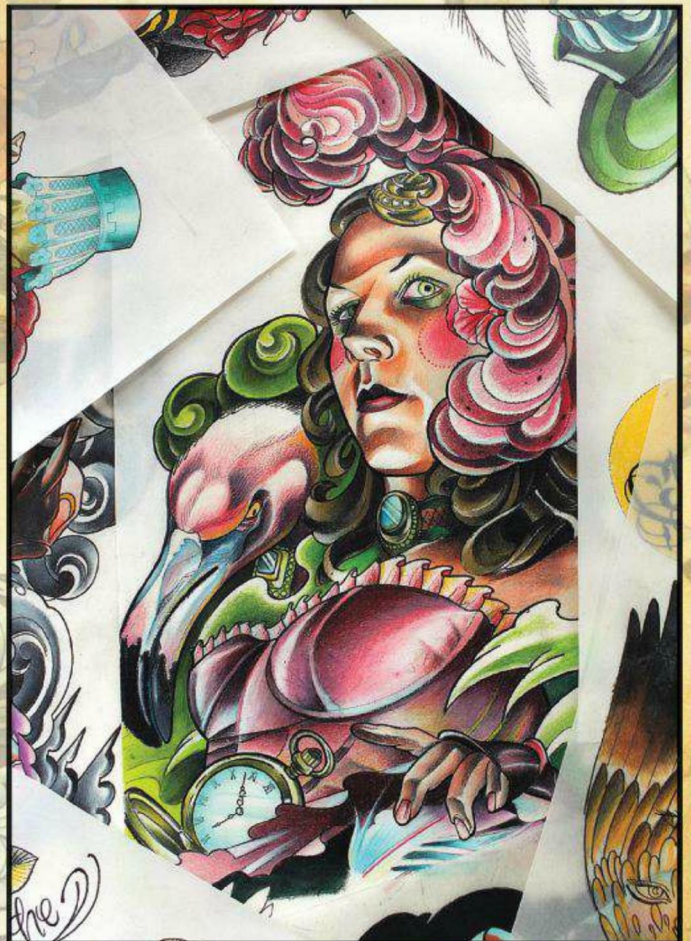
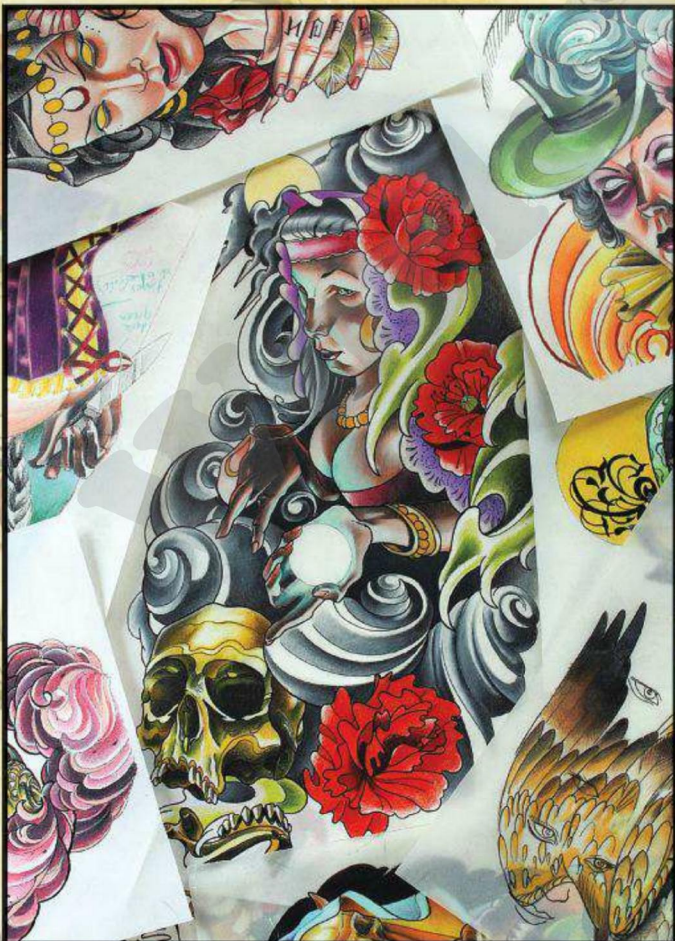
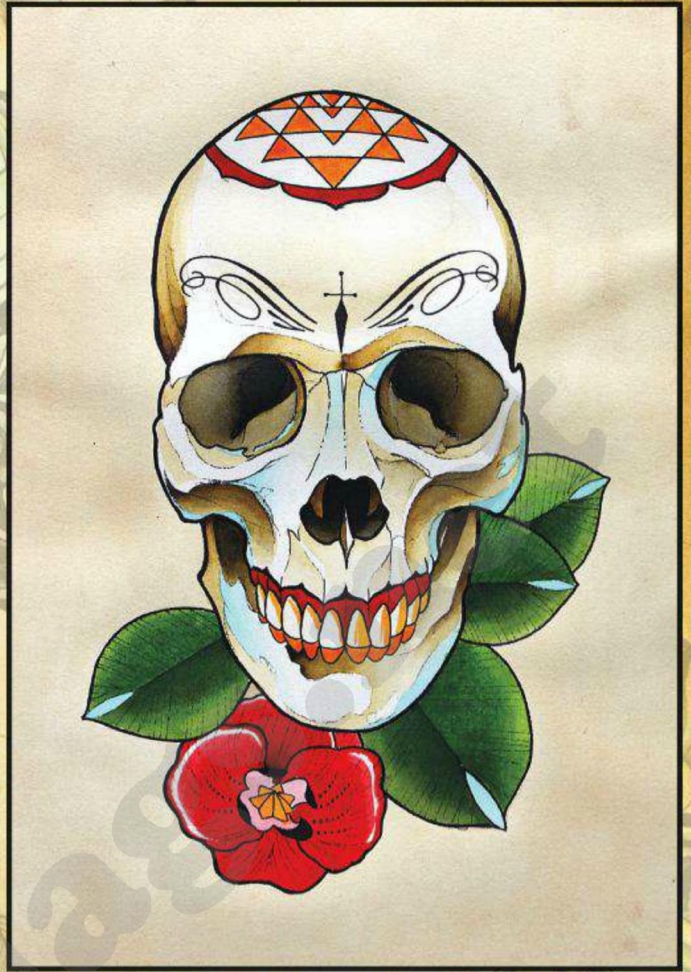
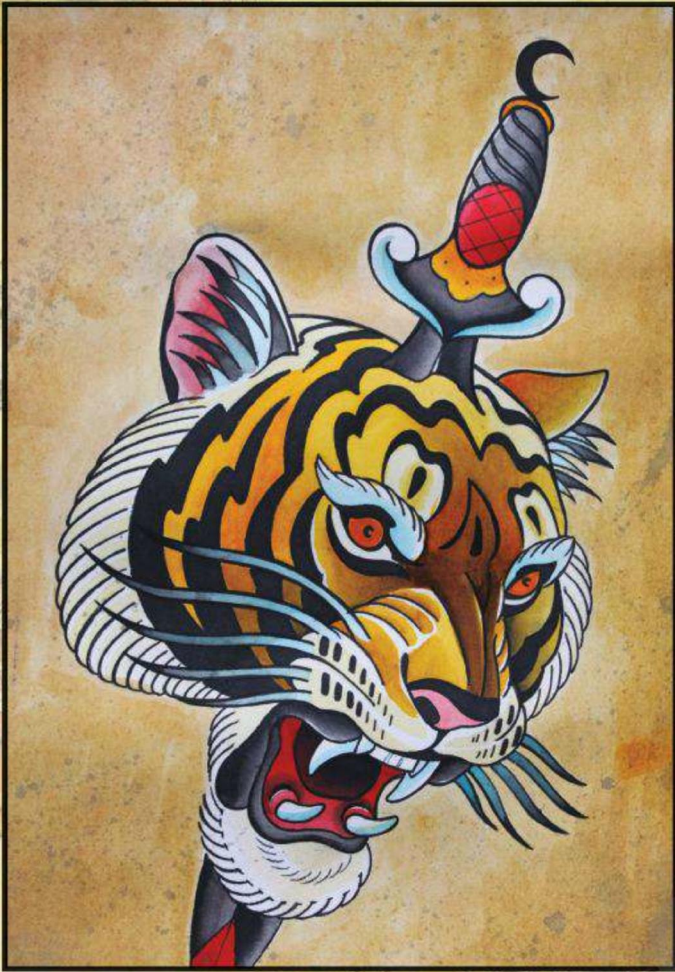
















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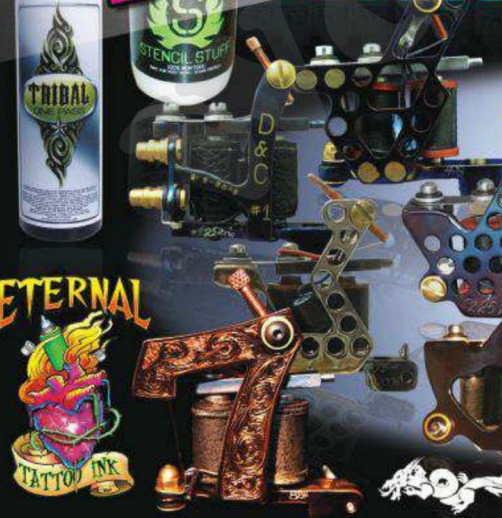


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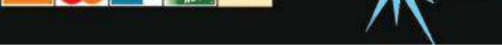
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THE THING!

WORKING ON A MYSTERY WITH VERY FEW CLUES

By Chris Pfouts

This is a mystery almost completely without clues. There are a few facts and educated suppositions we can attach to it, but not many.

The Thing came to me from a vendor at a swap meet near the Mason-Dixon line this last summer—sold to me as a tattoo implement. I have dealt with the vendor before and he said it was sold to him as a tattoo tool. Not exactly a wealth of information there, but it's safe to believe that little scrap to be honest. That's about all we know as far as provenance. Basically nothing except that when we call it a tattoo tool, we're not making it up.

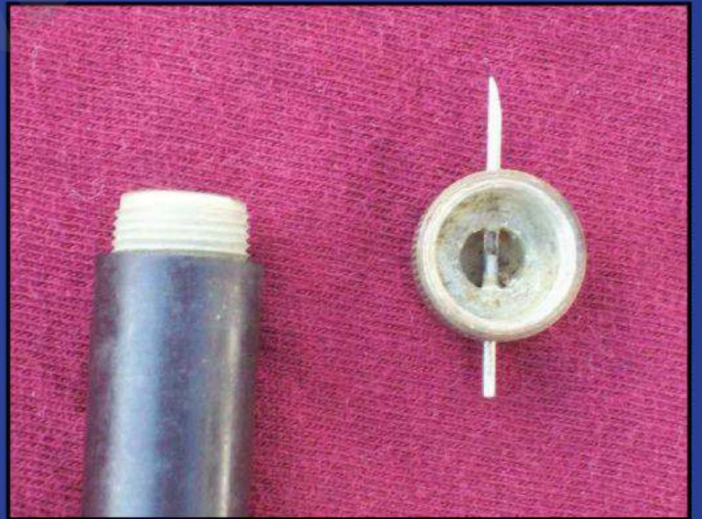
And that's worth something. The Thing is butt-simple. All the writing on it simply says Pat. Pending. That's almost totally meaningless. Manufacturers can stamp that on there as soon as they file the application. It would really help if there was a patent number, which, of course, there isn't. Nor is there a maker's mark. That would be a big help, too.

Anyway, here's what we have—one black main barrel, which has two metal thread-on end caps. The business end of this deal has what looks for all the world to be a fat hypo needle sticking out at right angles. Inside the cap, the hypo needle has been ground ever so slightly to expose its hollow center.

Our thinking is that you're supposed to put ink into the main barrel. It can flow from there through the little nick out the pointy end of the hypo and into the skin. Application is via sideways tap tap tap, South Pacific style, working the needle straight into the skin to make the tattoo.

The end cap opposite from the business end also has a threaded hole in it. Best guess is that some kind of extension

THE THING!



is meant to go in there, offering both a counterweight and a longer surface to pivot on and to give the tool a better working surface.

If we read this tool correctly, a major difference between this and all other tattoo devices is that it contains its own ink—that, and of course the right-angle attack. Also, knowing what we know about sharps and ink penetration in the layers of skin and so on, it seems like this is likely to make a nasty smeary kind of line. Maybe good for animal marking or numbering, but a smooth precise line is unlikely.

On the other hand, it might give some kind of wild psychedelic effect that can't be gotten with other tools.

Finally, it occurs to me that you could supercharge this thing—or maybe you were supposed to—by putting a little rubber hose over the non-pointy end of the hypo needle and gently blowing into it. That could force ink back into the barrel, or it could force it into the skin. Not very sanitary, but older tattoo implements were not made for surgical cleanliness.

We have sent pictures of this out to some of the greater historical tattoo minds in the world today. If we get some interesting results, we'll bring this widget back and give the information to you. 🎲



MUNCIE'S DAN STEWART

"I SHIFT ON YOUR GRAVE"

By Chris Pfouts

"I THANK GOD DAILY THAT I DON'T HAVE TO ROAD MARCH 15 MILES A DAY AT WORK." -DAN STEWART

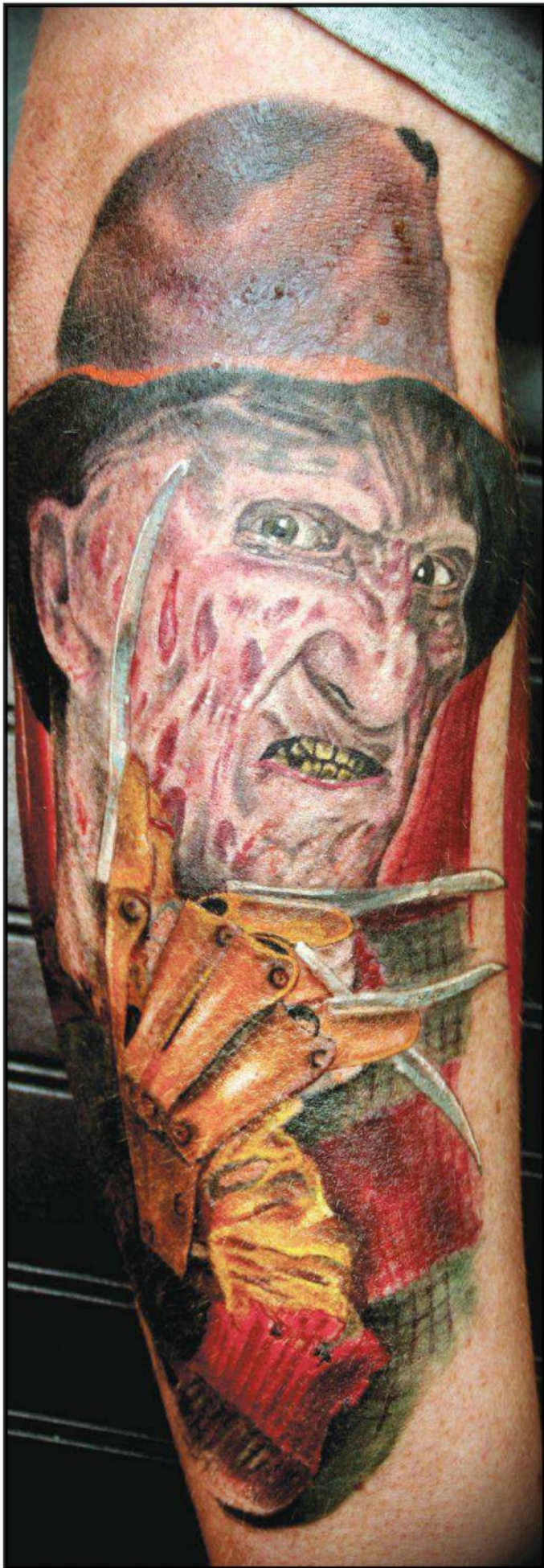
Muncie, Indiana is a famous small town for several reasons. For one thing, it's a college burg, home turf of Ball State University and its NCAA Cardinals teams. Far more important, in motorsports circles, were the transmissions made there for General Motors muscle cars. Muncie transmissions are tough and dependable, even when running behind a big block, and they are still much in demand. Muncie is also the home of Lucky Rabbit Tattoos, owned by Dan Stewart.

Shuffling through Fostoria, Ohio, in the 1990s, Dan Stewart looked like any other art-obsessed kid. "As a teenager I walked around with this portfolio, this sketchbook, pages are falling out on the floor, and people said, 'What's with this guy, what's he doing?' I was drawing all the time, because there was nothing to do," he said. "I found it really easy to submerge myself in that. Today it's the same way, only it's not a sketchbook. It might be an oil painting or something."

Along with helping him pass time, the art got him noticed. A friend's stepfather asked to see the work. The stepfather happened to be an old-time tattooer named Jim Bryan, who hired the kid on at \$20 per to do drawings for his clients' custom tattoos. It wasn't long before that turned into an apprenticeship.

The image of Stewart as a disorganized, all-consumed pencil-slinger, even though he presents himself like that, is not at all accurate these days. Lucky Rabbit Tattoos, which Stewart opened in 2003, is shipshape, immaculate and



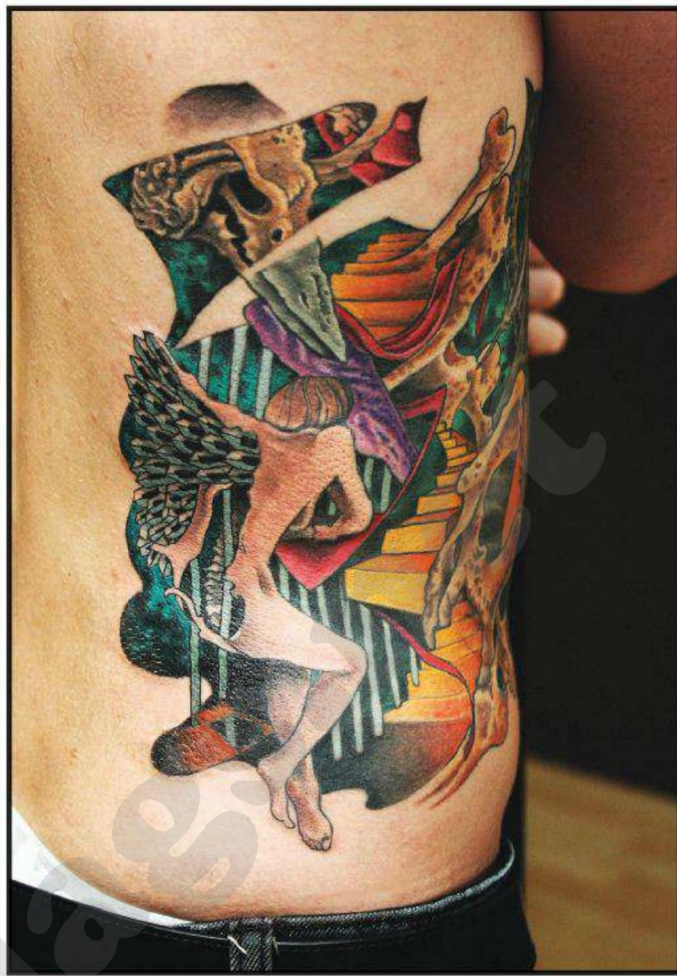


spiffed out in every way. Stewart joined the Army right after high school, which transformed him in many ways. "The military helped me to be more organized, and pay attention to detail," he said. "Both of which are extremely important in tattooing." But, he added, "I thank God daily that I don't have to road march 15 miles a day at work."

Stewart was a laboratory technician in the service. From there, he said, "I brought the medical side to [our shop]. Jim Bryan was an old biker guy. He wasn't so much about the extreme cleanliness of the situation, but more about the tattooing. So I had the medical side, and that gave the customers a little something extra. Of course now it's a necessity."


The Army also triggered Stewart's decision to become a full-time tattooer. And the first smart move after completing his apprenticeship, it seemed to him, was to develop a following. "I had to keep two other full-time jobs until I built a steady clientele base," he said. "But it paid off."

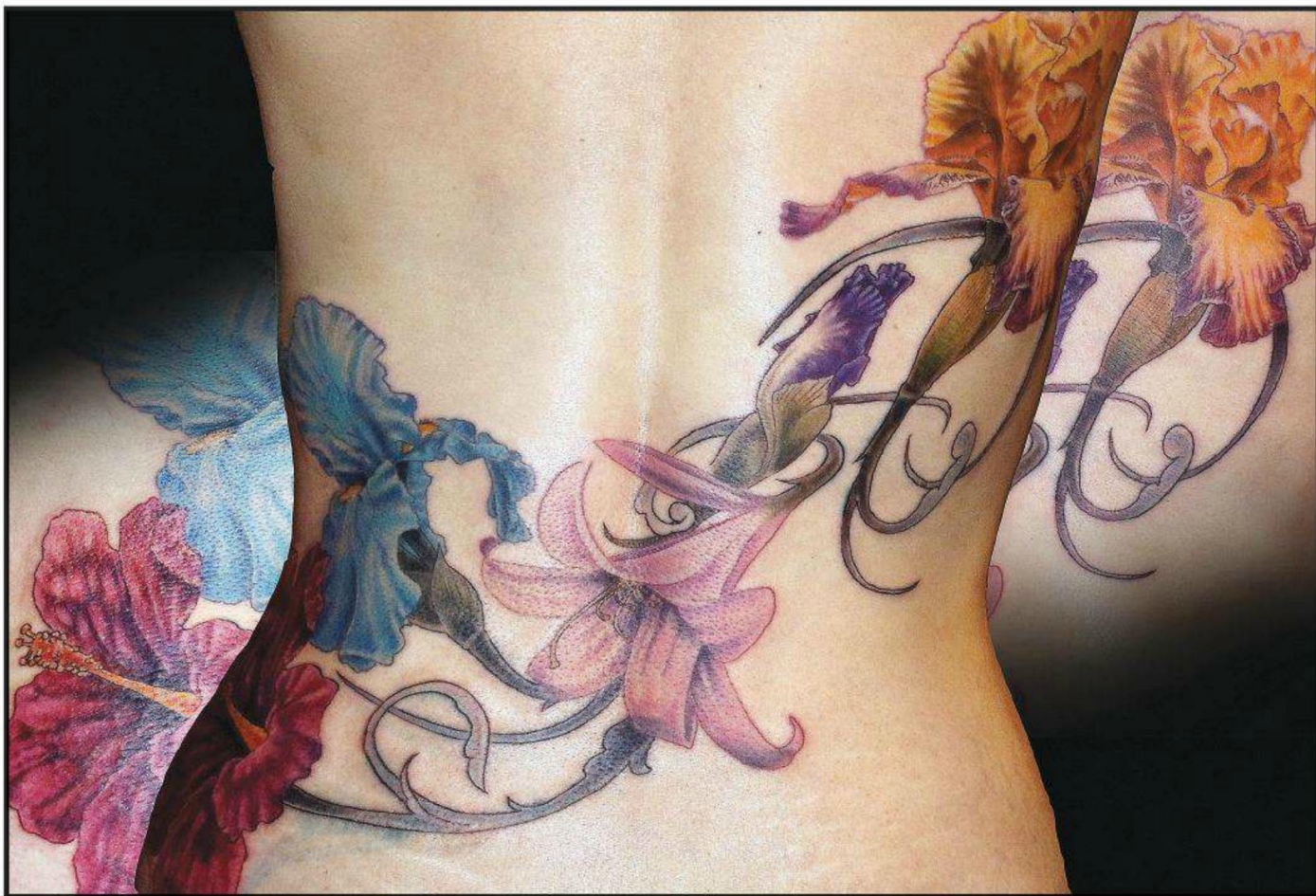
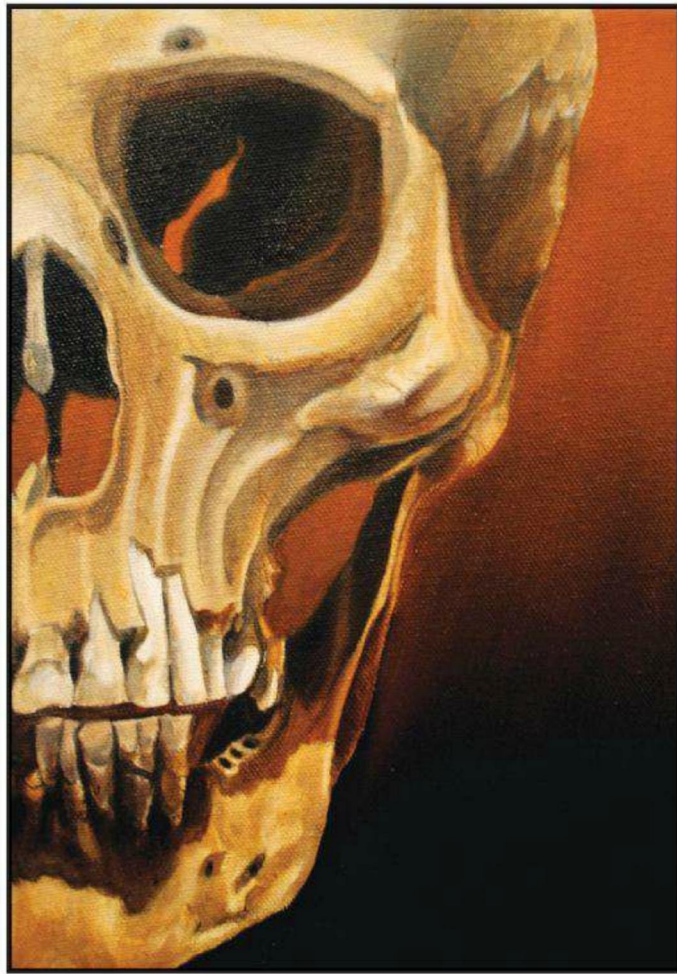
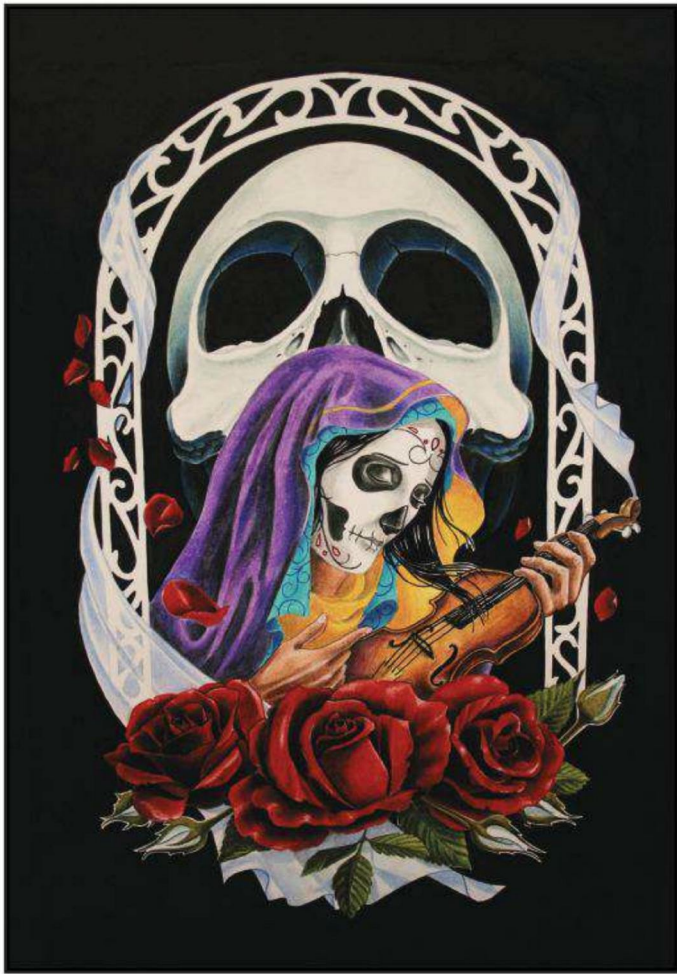
Stewart has been an avid conventioner since 1999. He got his initial taste at an annual motorcycle show in Columbus, Ohio. The experience was massively inspirational—the tattooers were crowded together in what could almost be called a side street in the convention hall. It really felt like the tattoo artists were there as an afterthought, he said. His first real tattoo convention was in Massachusetts in 2002. Instead of being a third leg to a bike event, he said, "it was a full-blown tattoo convention. It was a much better atmosphere. Artists were doing Art Fusion, learning in seminars and having a good time bonding and really helping the industry improve."

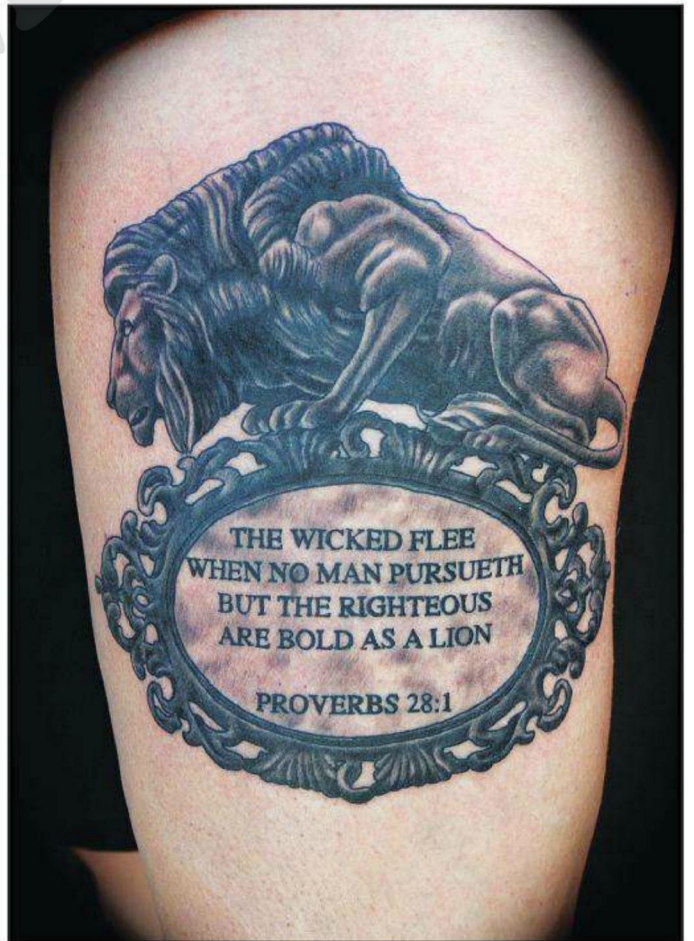


When Stewart settled down to open his shop, he backed off the travel for a while, but he is back on the convention circuit these days and hitting it hard, working on the floor and giving his seminar on Advanced Black and Grey Portrait Techniques. One of the things Stewart stressed about his seminar is that all participants get bags that include samples of the products he uses, especially needles, tubes and ink, so they can do exactly what he showed them with no deviation.

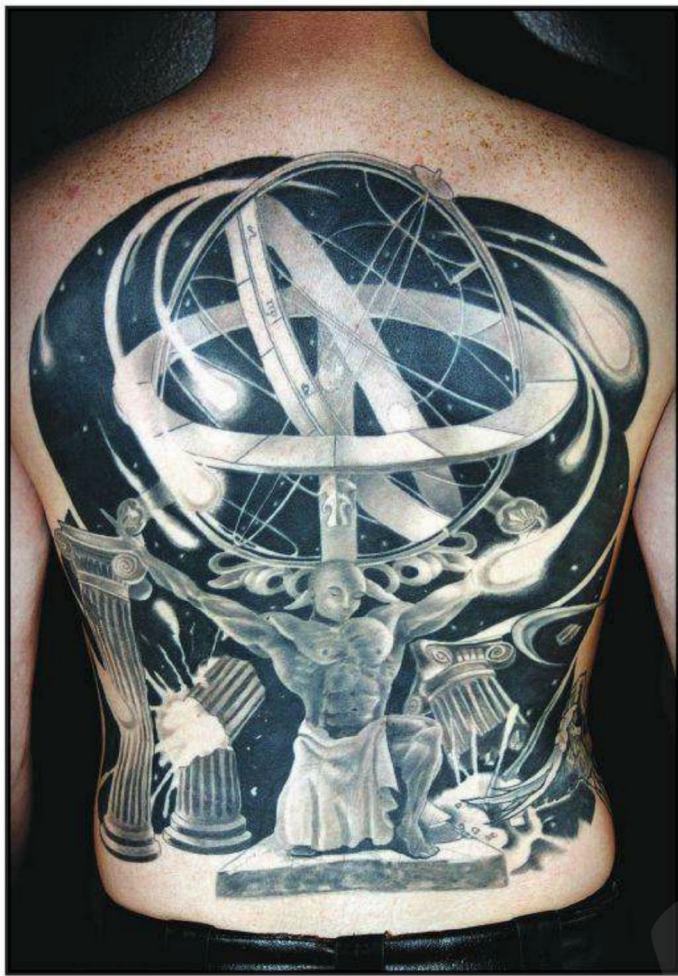
After eight years, his shop has settled into a comfortable rhythm. "I have a traditional guy," he said, "and a guy that does cartoon or illustrative type work, and I do more of the realism. I'm pretty well versed in all of it, but these guys specialize in those areas and I'll push it toward them."

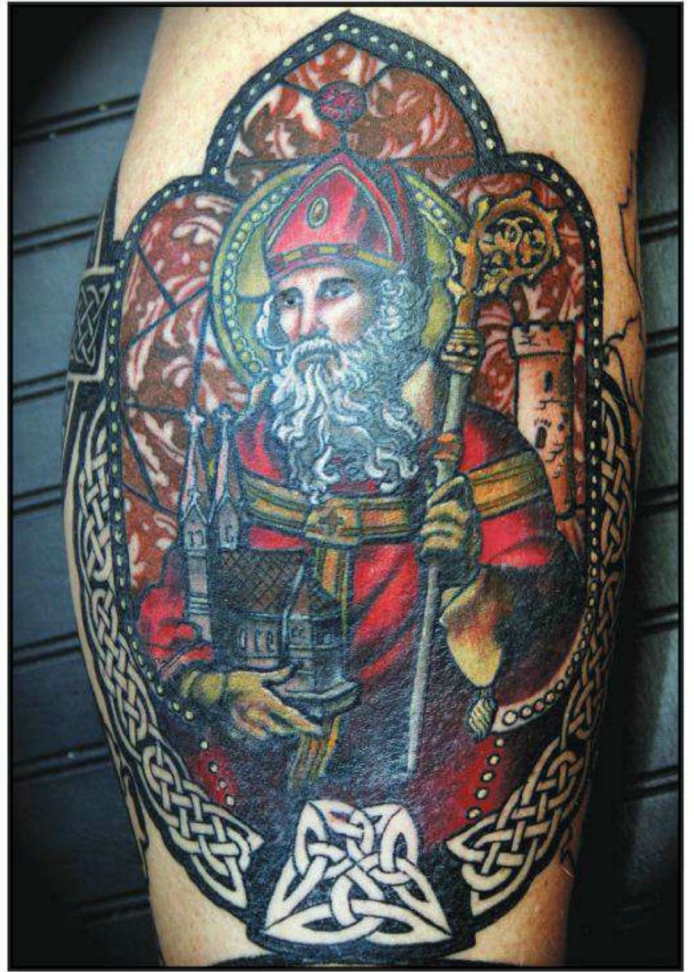
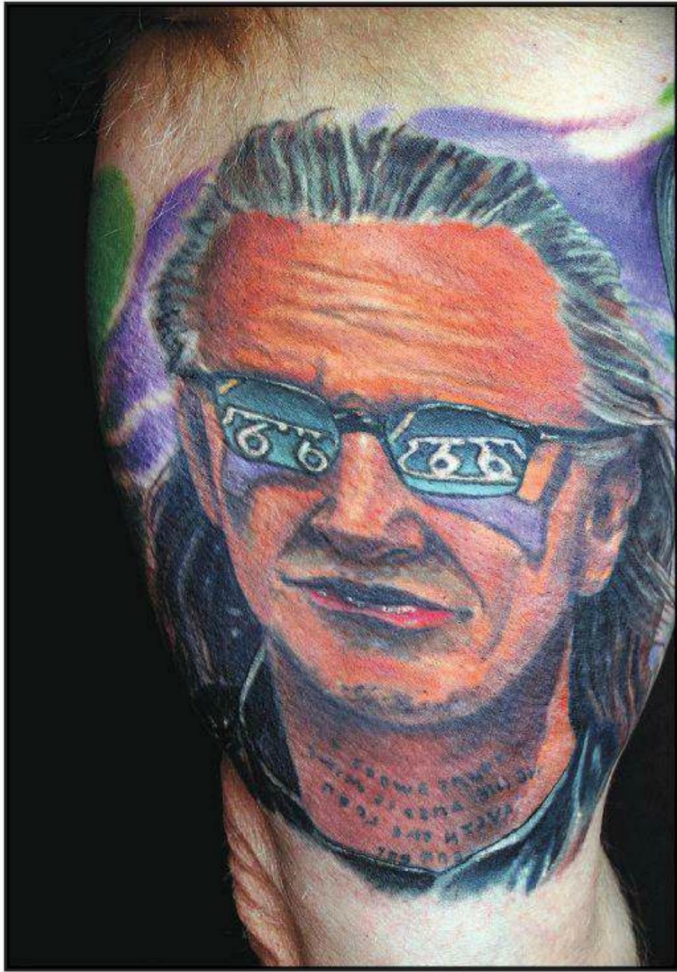
To get a look at Stewart's latest work, visit www.dan.luckytats.com, or call Lucky Rabbit Tattoos at (765) 287-0777. 

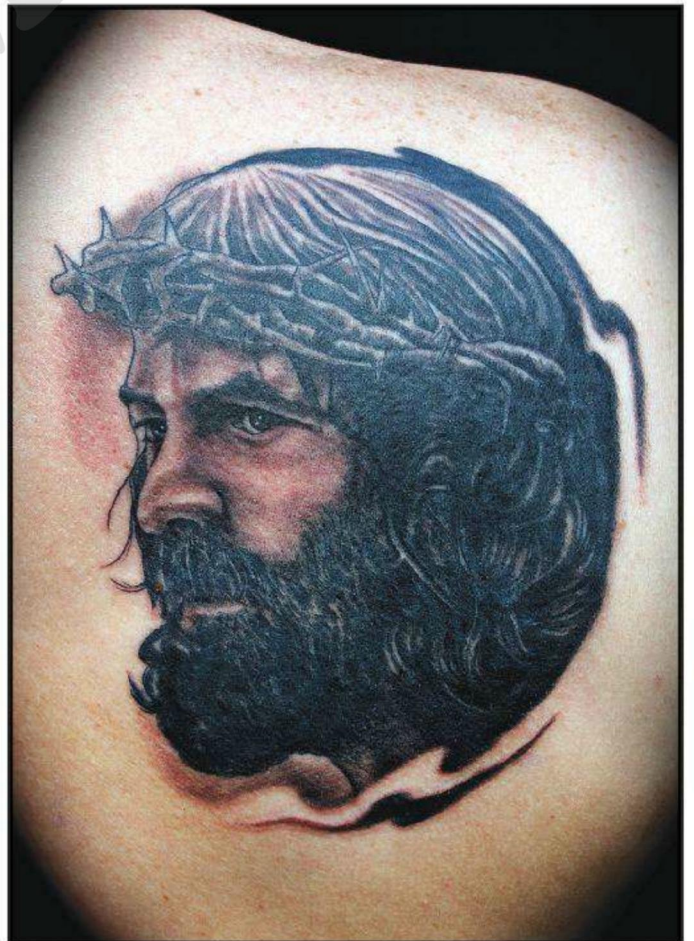














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BLOOD BROTHER

Tattoos by
Beto Munoz

By Amanda Stephan

When Beto Munoz was 7 years old he had an artistic awakening. His older brother Juan had been sketching and showing him a few technical tricks. These simple tricks made a huge impression on young Munoz, showing him just how dynamic art could be. He instantly fell in love with the drawing process. "I was hooked from that moment," he said, "and started drawing my favorite cartoon characters. I remember I drew this terrible Bart Simpson with the Reebok pump shoes dunking a basketball and I thought it was so awesome. I took it to school and showed everyone my amazing new sketch. It's funny how these things stick in our memories."

As big of an impact as this artistic discovery had on Munoz, he didn't connect it with what he might one day do for a living. Beginning at age 14, Munoz worked a variety of odd jobs that included store stocking, carpet installation, carpentry, cable installation and factory work. "I was the guy who would work somewhere for a year or so then get bored and quit. I was never able to stay somewhere for more than two years," he said. "I got very lucky because if I hadn't started tattooing I would have had a completely different life, and I love my life."

Like many other tattooists, Munoz began in his home. In 2004, he started tattooing sporadically, with no guidance from outside resources. He had hoped to secure an apprenticeship from a local studio, but it didn't happen. "I worked out of my house for almost three years before I was given a chance to work at a professional shop," he said. "Since I had no one to teach me, I had to learn the hard way, which was by trial and error. I remember going into shops to apply for apprenticeships and being turned down over twenty times. It was hard getting rejected so many times and I felt like I would never get into a professional shop."

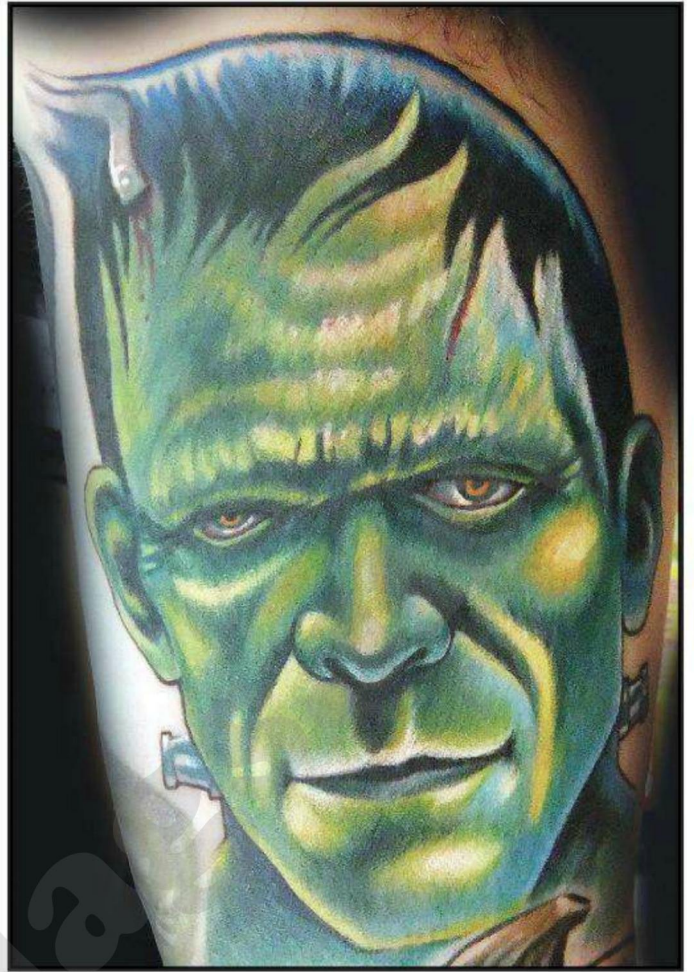
With no one to instruct him, Munoz found learning to tattoo incredibly difficult. He realized that there was so much that he would have to learn in order to produce a solid tattoo. Nevertheless, Munoz persevered and remained committed to mastering the process. Hard work was not a foreign concept to Munoz. He grew up near Chicago in an old-fashioned Mexican family. "My parents suffered a lot in their lives to give us what they could. It is through their struggle and hard work that I have understood the value of hard work," Munoz said. "If you want something, you have to work hard, and the harder you work, the faster you will be able reach your goals. I live by this motto every day. It may seem to some that I have an obsessive personality, but it has led me to where I am today."

Munoz's perseverance has paid off in a number of ways over the years. Three years after he began his self-instruction, he caught his first break. The owner of a local studio saw his work on a mutual customer and asked that Munoz come in for an interview. The owner saw potential in Munoz' portfolio, and invited him to spend some time around the studio. Shortly thereafter, they offered him a job and he has worked at Rising Phoenix Tattoo Studio ever since.

Rising Phoenix has become Munoz's second home. He is fixated on his work, so the majority of his time is spent at work. "Tattooing is my life, love, and obsession," he said. "I draw a lot, so that I can be a better painter, and I paint, so that I can be a better tattoo artist."

The studio truly became more like home for Munoz when his other, younger brother, Jimmy also started tattooing there. Two years ago, Jimmy left his job at an office to become his brother's apprentice. The brothers now work together and live together. "We use each other for motivation and inspiration," Beto said. "Almost like weightlifters use a spotter to get through more reps, he pushes me to do better. You can say he keeps me on my toes. We bounce ideas off of each other and are currently working on a couple of tattoo collaborations. They are some of my favorite pieces."

The Munoz brothers hope to expand on their efforts to attend more conventions overseas. "I try to do a couple conventions a year," Beto said. "I love the whole scene; all the artists I respect working all around you, tattooing absolute masterpieces. I try to walk around and check out everyone's booth to see what they are working on. I have met some really amazing artists that I would have never known about if I hadn't gone to conventions."



Beto Munoz



"The harder you work, the faster you
will be able reach your goals."

-Beto Munoz

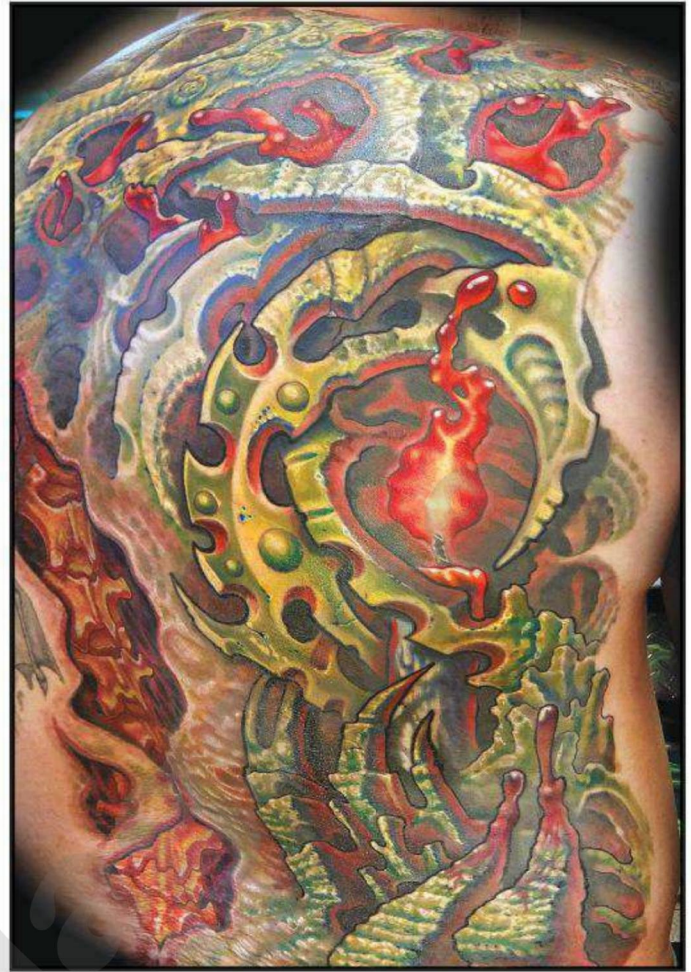


Additional conventions would allow Munoz to add more gold to his shelves. He has won 120 awards in the last three years alone. Even more importantly, his talent has earned him a steady clientele. "The shop has been slow," he said, "but I have built up enough of a loyal clientele that I have not been affected too much. There might be a shorter waiting period than two years ago but that can be a good thing.

"I hope the economy gets better, but I very much doubt that," he said. "Either way I am in it for the long haul and am ready for whatever."

The tattoos that Munoz is tackling are diverse in style and subject matter. Munoz's love of tattooing drives him to acquaint himself with all it has to offer, all the genres that are out there. "I used to love doing New Skool, then I was really into realism and portraits, and now I love working with organics and biomechanical shapes. The tattoos sometimes become a blend of all these styles together, which is when it becomes really fun. It's about keeping it fresh and exciting. I know that sounds like I am talking about married life but it works the same. To keep motivated, one must have constant change, or risk becoming stagnant."

Munoz posts a steady stream of new tattoos on the Internet each week. His passion for his work and his enthusiasm for life come across in every tattoo that he creates. "I hope to keep tattooing for the rest of my life," he said. "I love my job. I get to hang out with friends and create great art for really cool people. What else can I ask for? Even if I didn't need any money, I don't know what I would do with myself if I wasn't tattooing." To get to know Beto Munoz, visit his website www.monkeyproink.com or stop by Rising Phoenix Tattoo in Addison, Illinois.





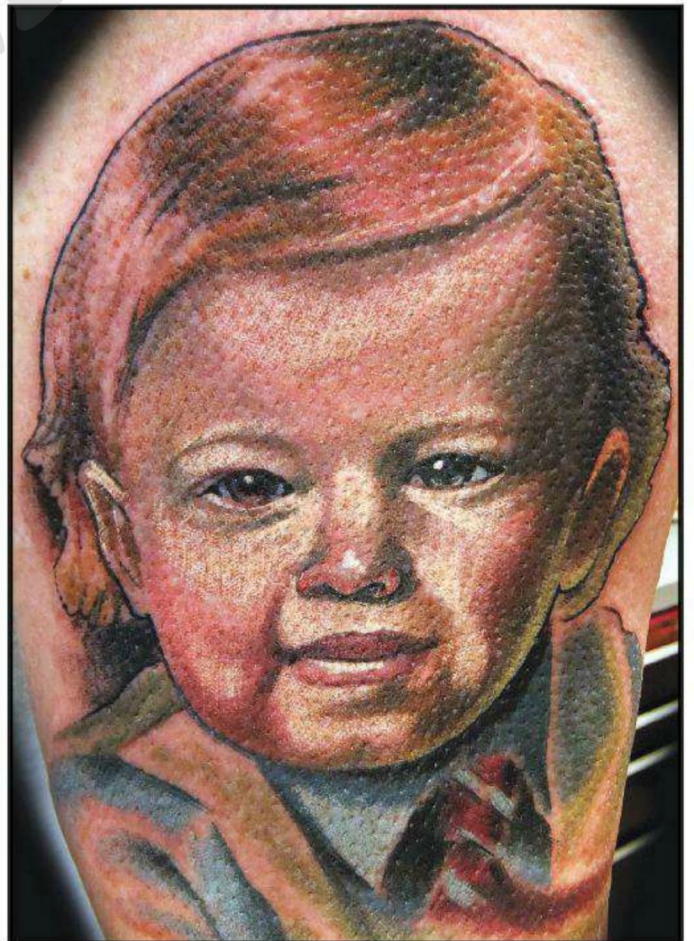
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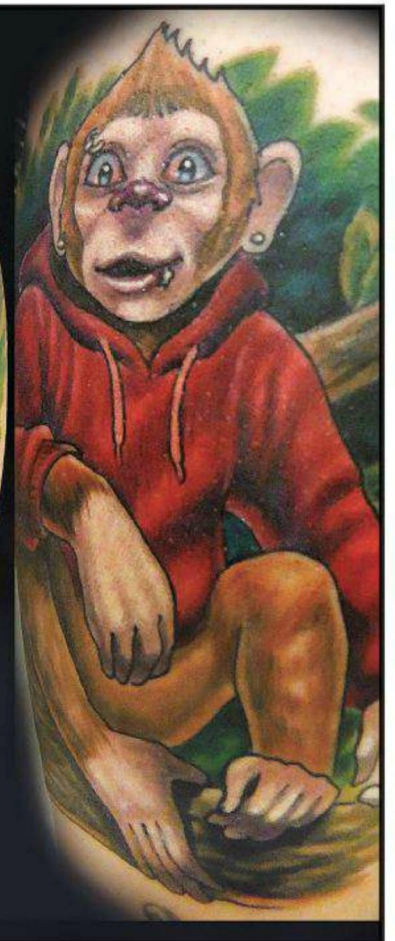
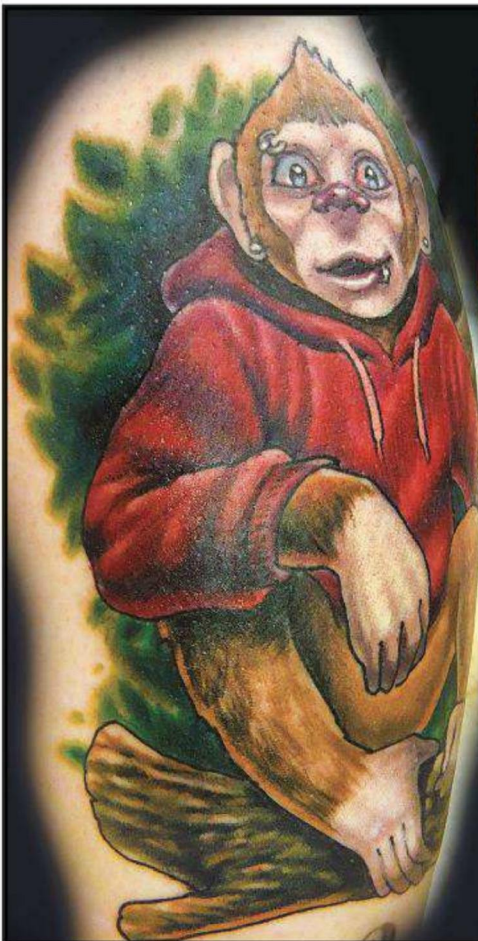
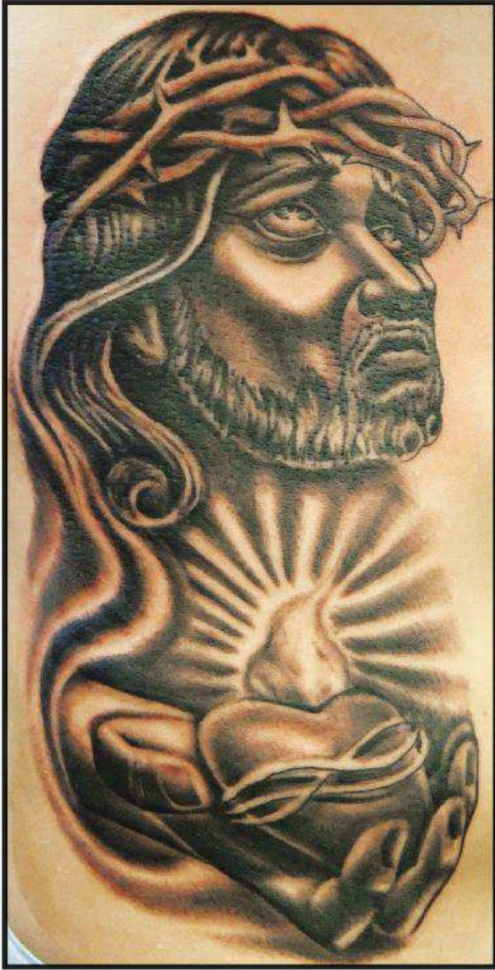
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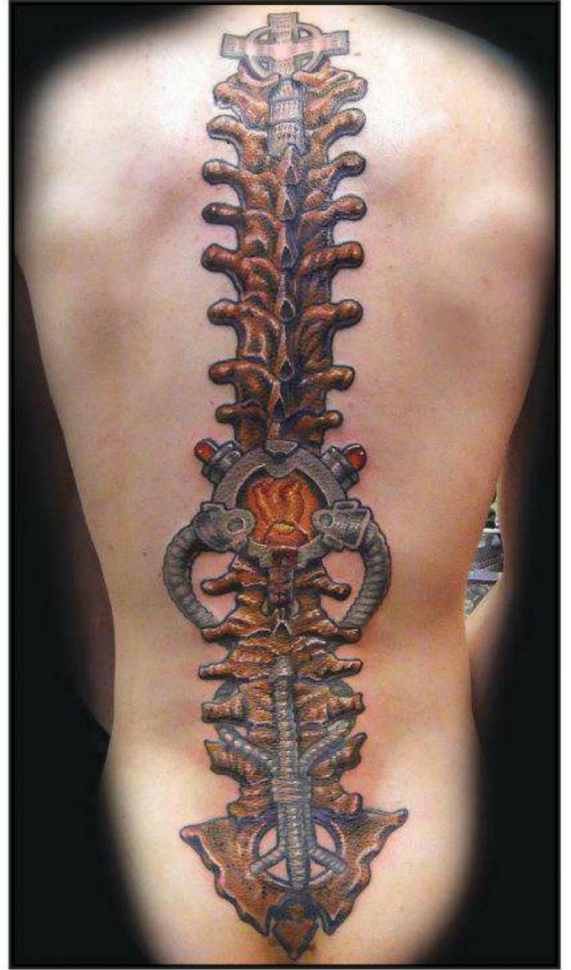
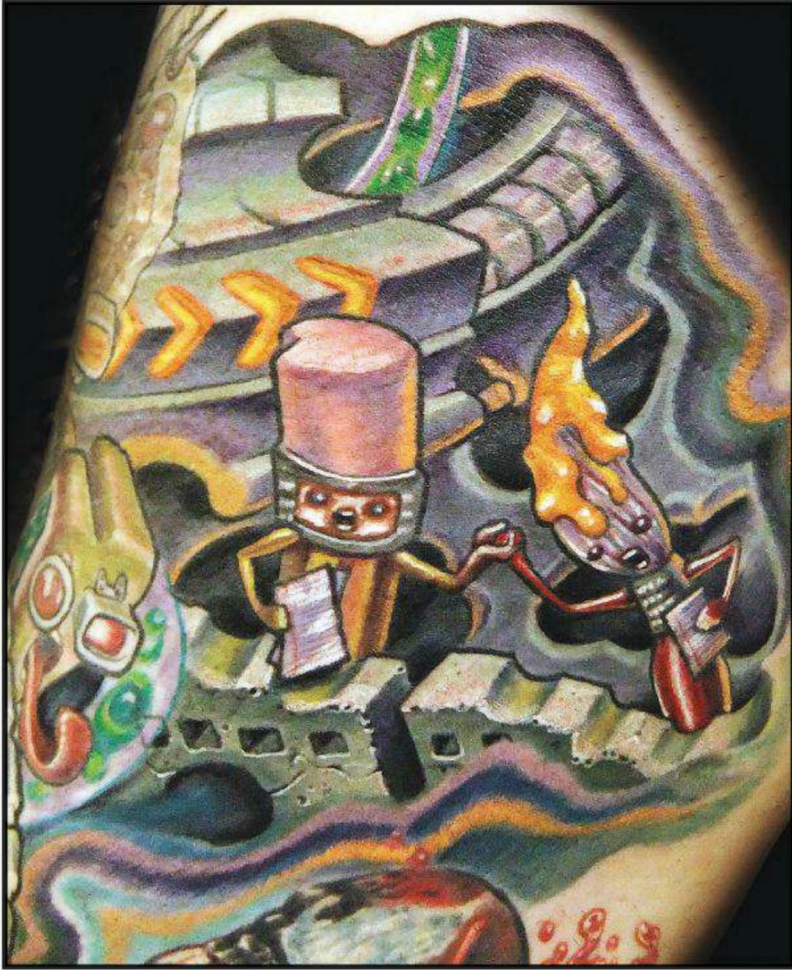














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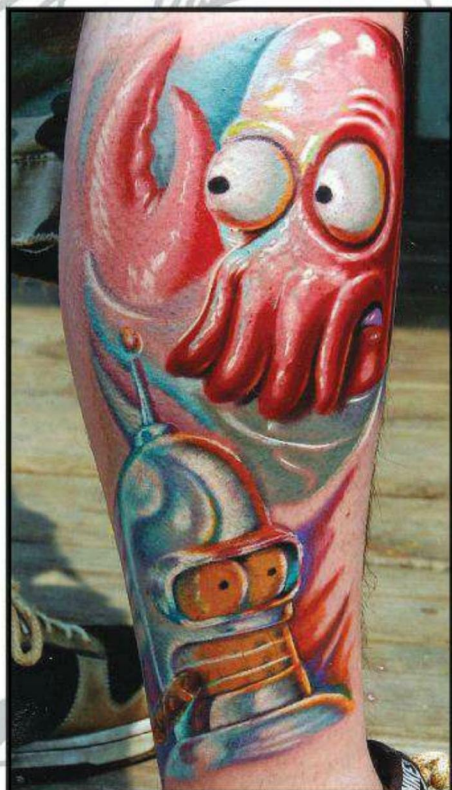


Photo: Dangerously Dolly

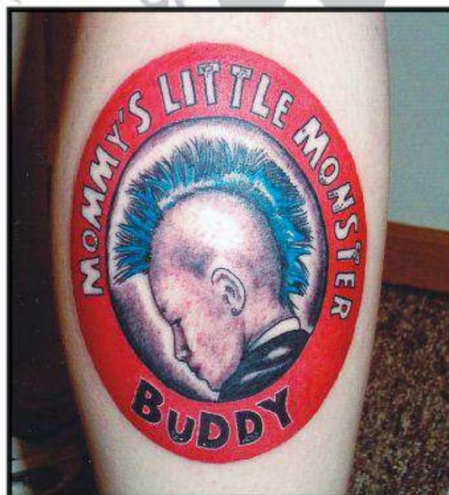
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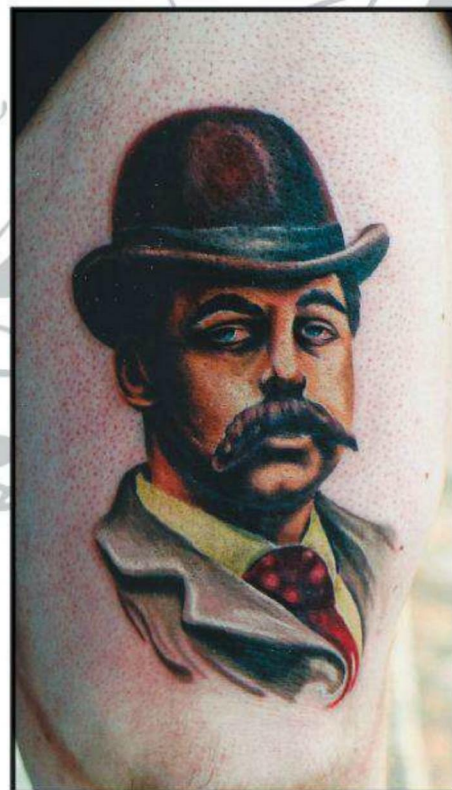
tattoos from around the globe



Andy Barrett, Horseshoes & Hand Grenades Tattoo
Chicopee, MA



Richie Vomit, Siouxicide City Tattoo
Sioux City, IA



DJ Minor, minorfamilytattoo.com
Reno, NV

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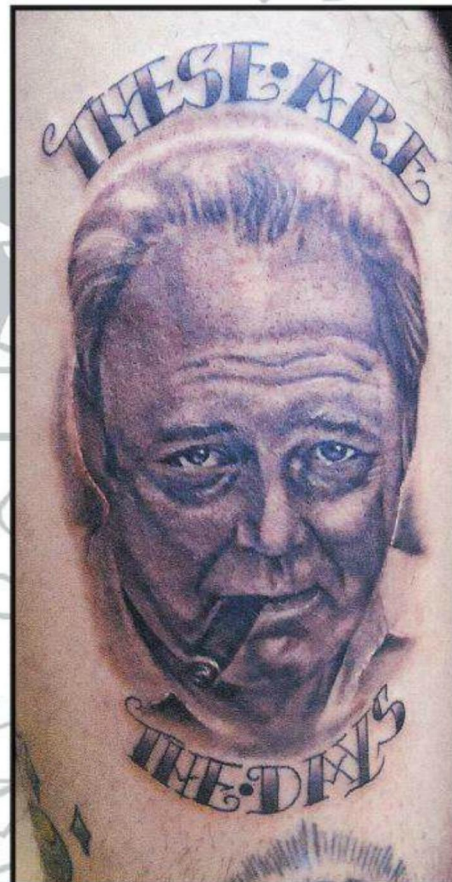
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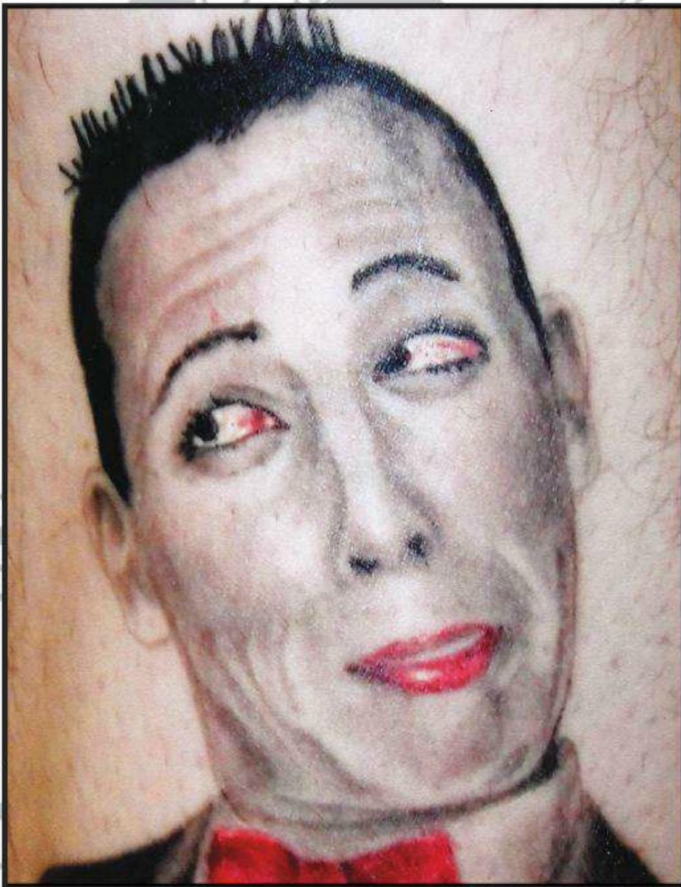
Wendall Frazier, Sure-Fire Tattoos
Lynwood, IL



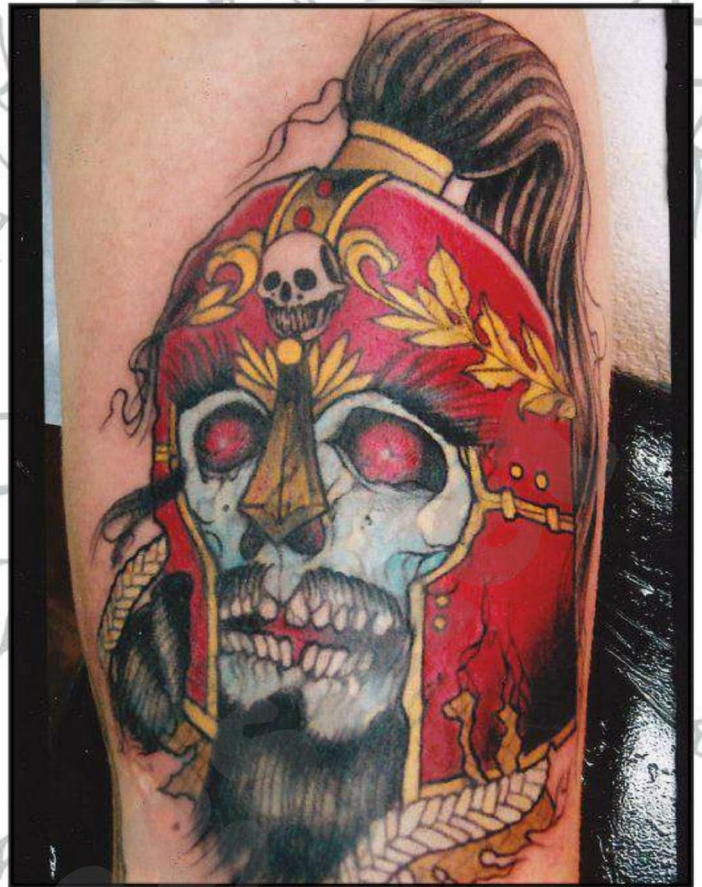
Mr. Aviv Rothshas, Psycho Tattoo
Tel-Aviv, Israel



Jeremiah Beshears, Integrity Tattoo
San Jose, CA



Josh Bush
Sioux City, IA



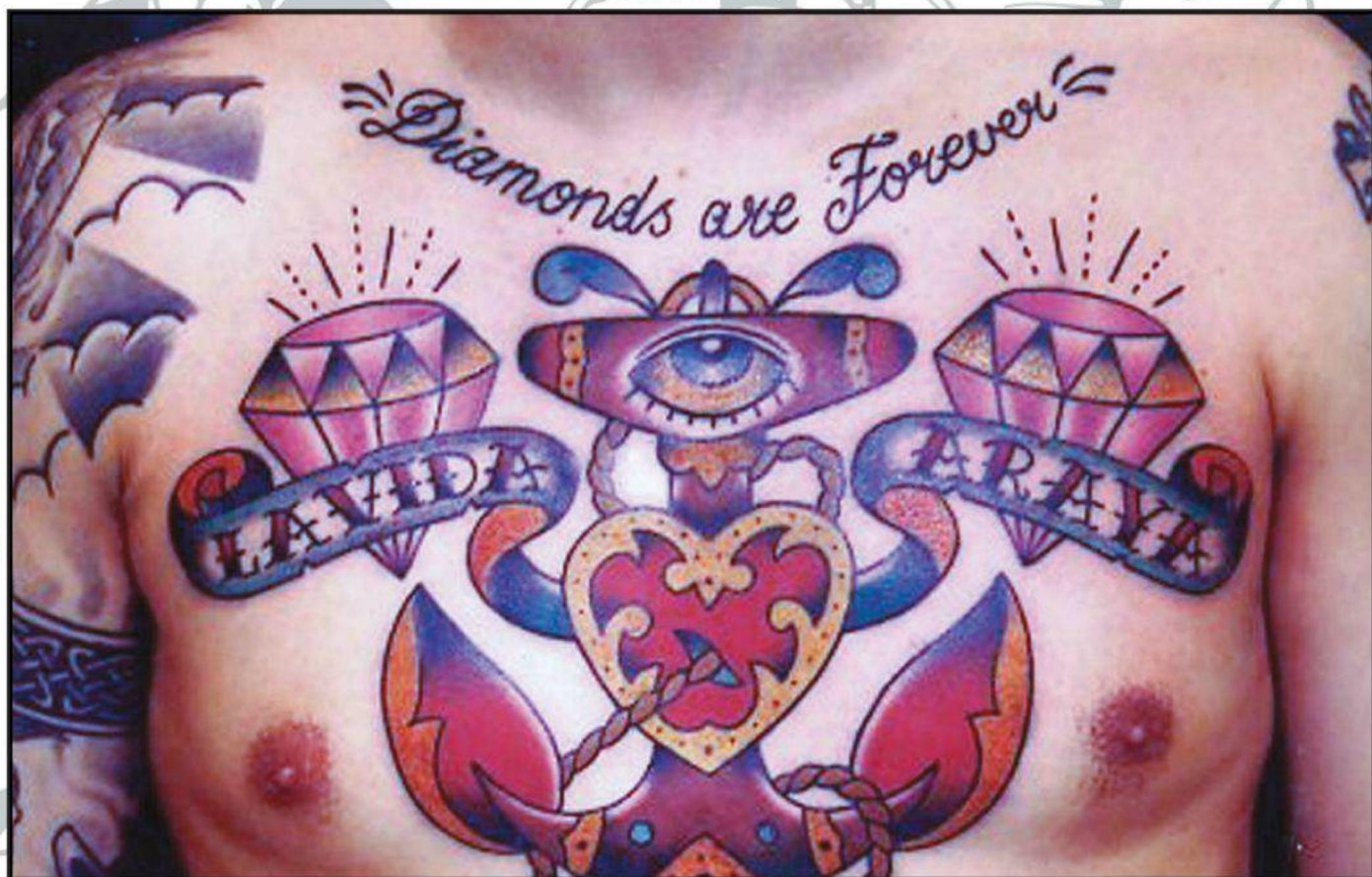
Aaron Hodges, Idle Hand Tattoo
San Francisco, CA



Ben Fiedler, Resurrection Tattoo
Austin, TX



AJ Ludlow, Royal Street Tattoo
Mobile, AL



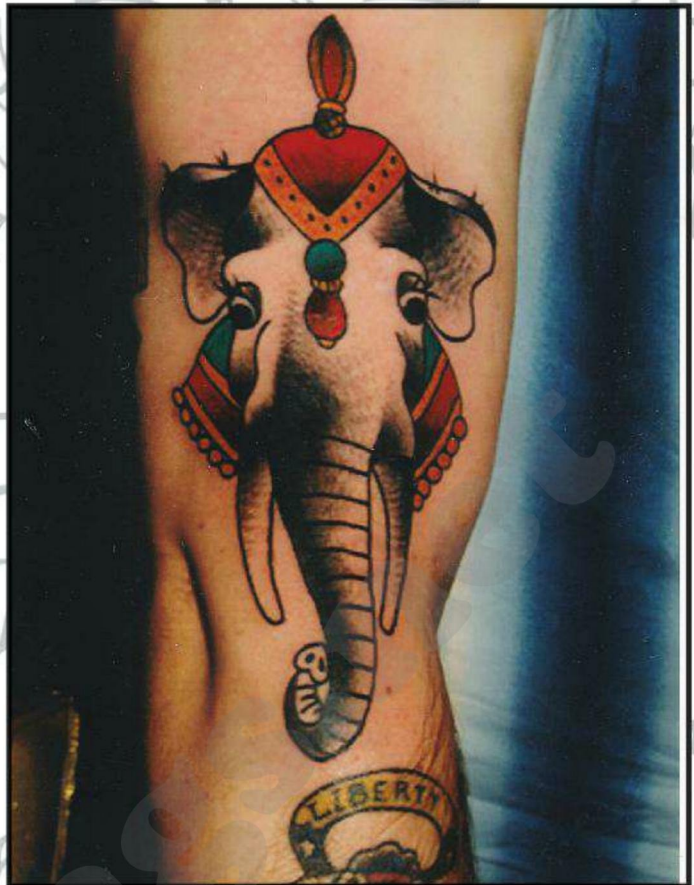
Han, King of Kings Tattoo
Swalmen, Holland



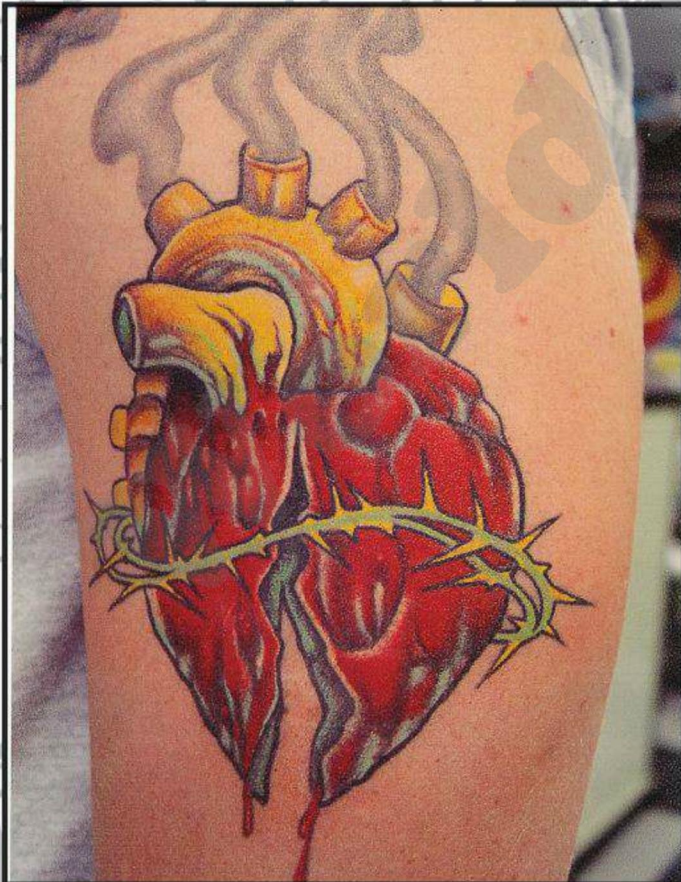
Kimberly Meyer, Artistic Impressions Tattoo Studio
Riverton, WY



Jim White, Chrome Gardens
Gettysburg, PA



Doc Cooper, Saint Tattoo
Knoxville, TN



Jerrett Spaeth, Monarch Tattoo
Kennewick, WA



Corey Sommers, Saint Tattoo
Knoxville, TN



Miss Arianna, Skinwear
Rimini, Italy



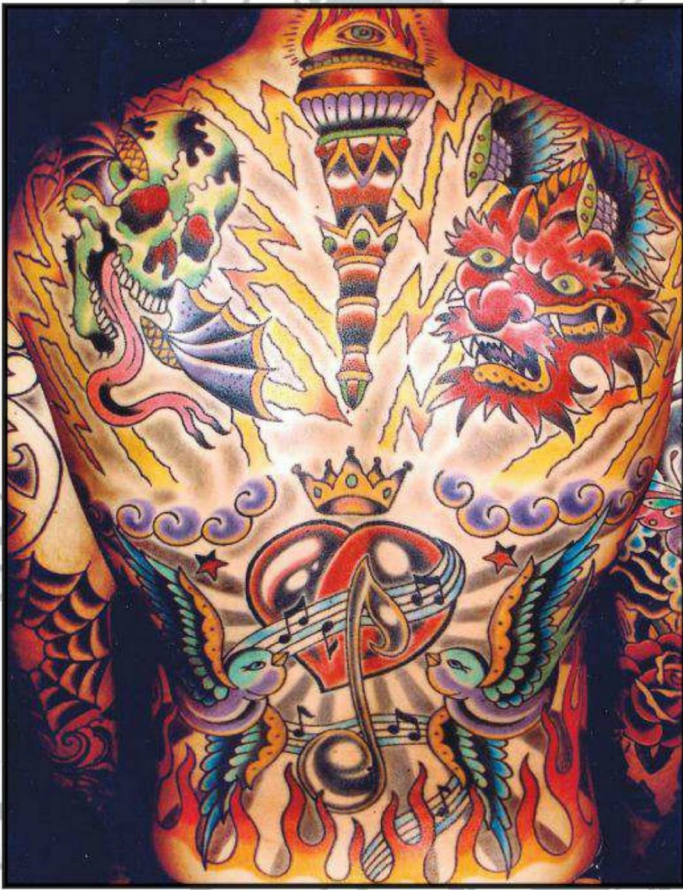
Lisa Strange, Acid Works Tattoo
Mt. Morris, MI



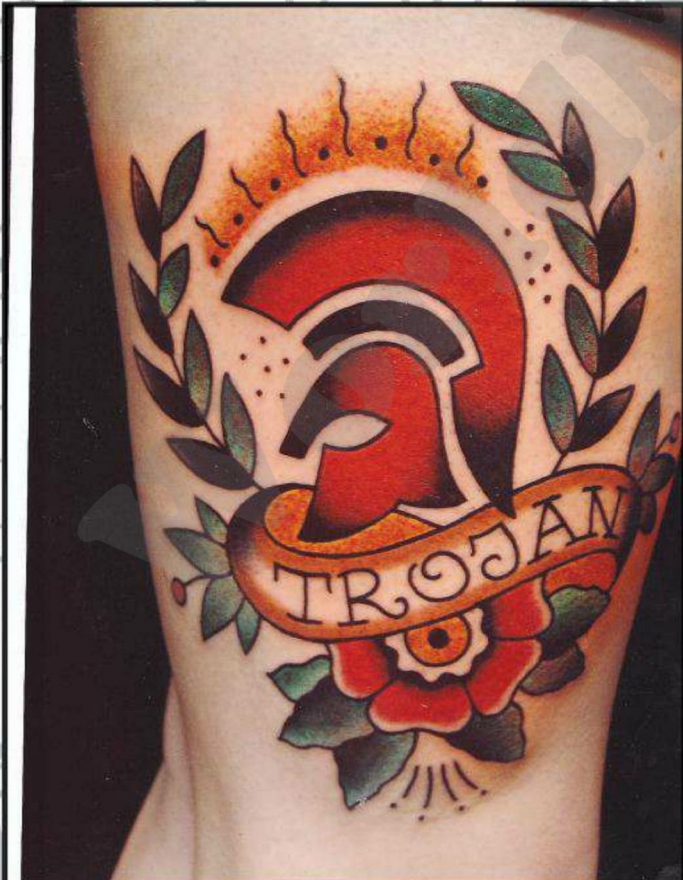
Jim White, Chrome Gardens
Gettysburg, PA



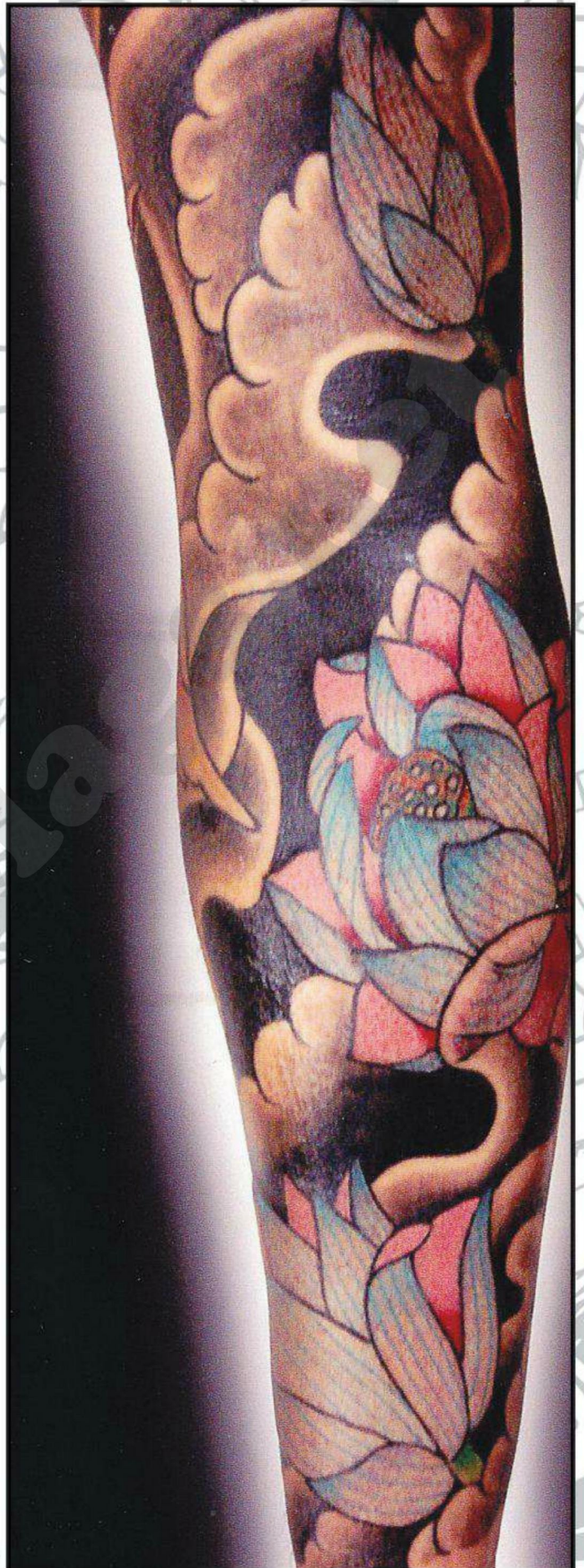
Dawnii Fantana, Painted Lady Tattoo Parlour
Birmingham, UK



*Han, King of Kings Tattoo
Swalmen, Holland*



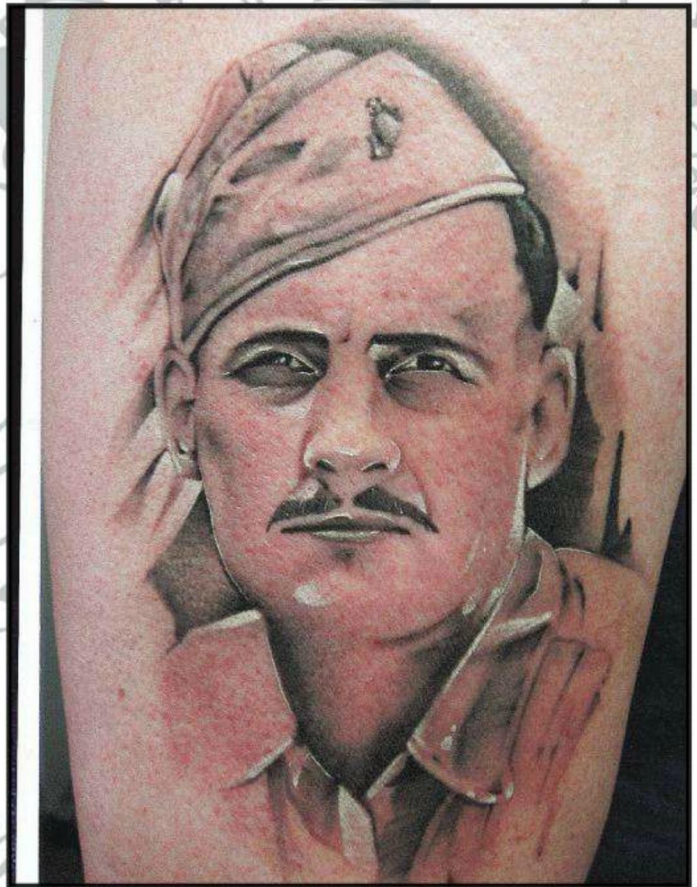
*Han, King of Kings Tattoo
Swalmen, Holland*



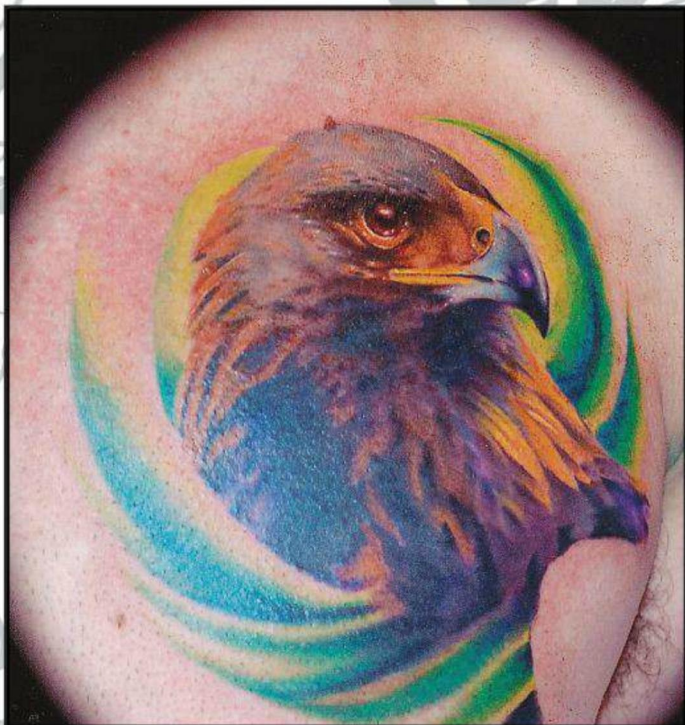
*Tito Velez, Euphoria Ink
Roselle, NJ*



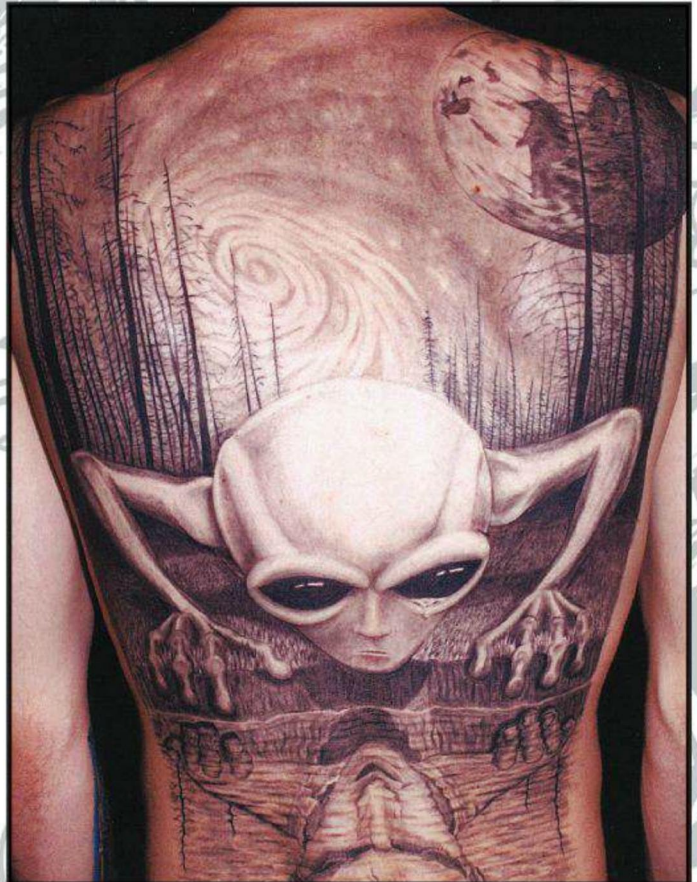
*Han, King of Kings Tattoo
Swalmen, Holland*



*Austin Grove, Evolution Tattoo Studio
State College, PA*



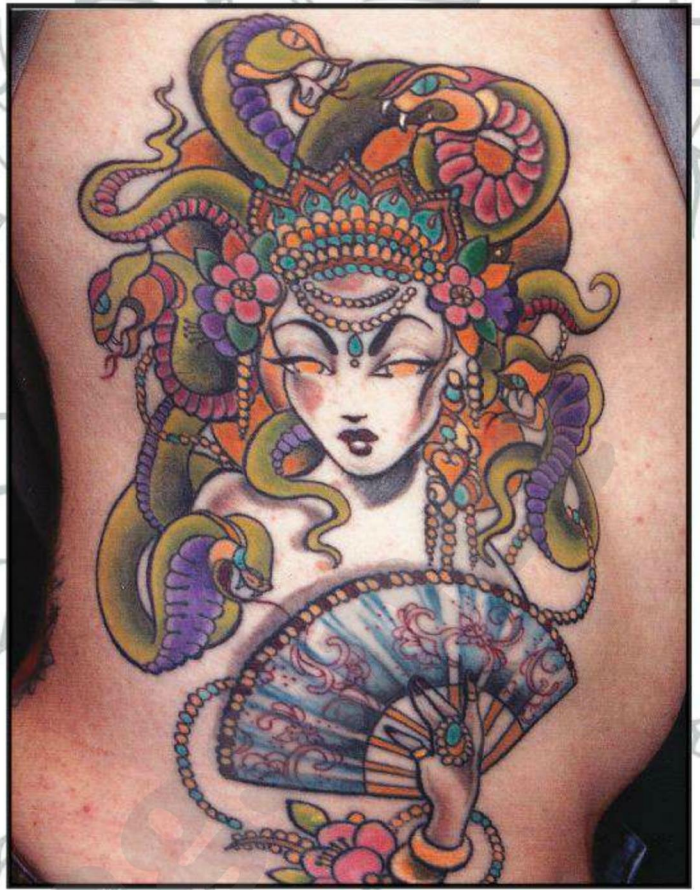
*Damien Robertson, Perfect Image
Alberta, Canada*



*Travis Jones, Skin Gallery
Corner Brook, Canada*



Kenneth 'Tat' Brian, Intimate Body Art Studios
Glenside, PA



Dawnii Fantana, Painted Lady Tattoo Parlour
Birmingham, UK



Dawnii Fantana, Painted Lady Tattoo Parlour
Birmingham, UK



Kenneth 'Tat' Brian, Intimate Body Art Studios
Glenside, PA



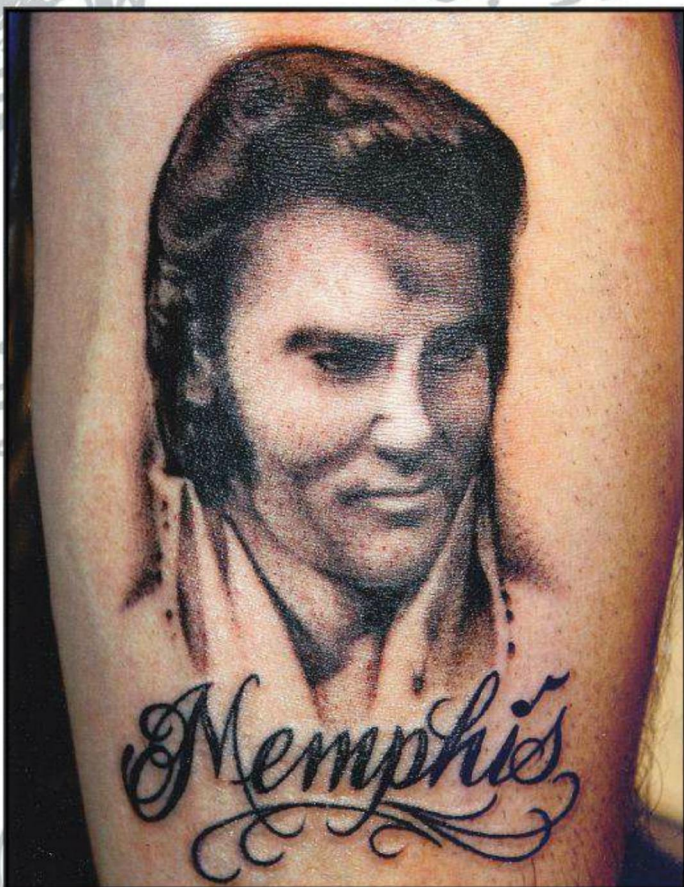
Gavin Williams, Old Ghost Tattoo
Melbourne, FL



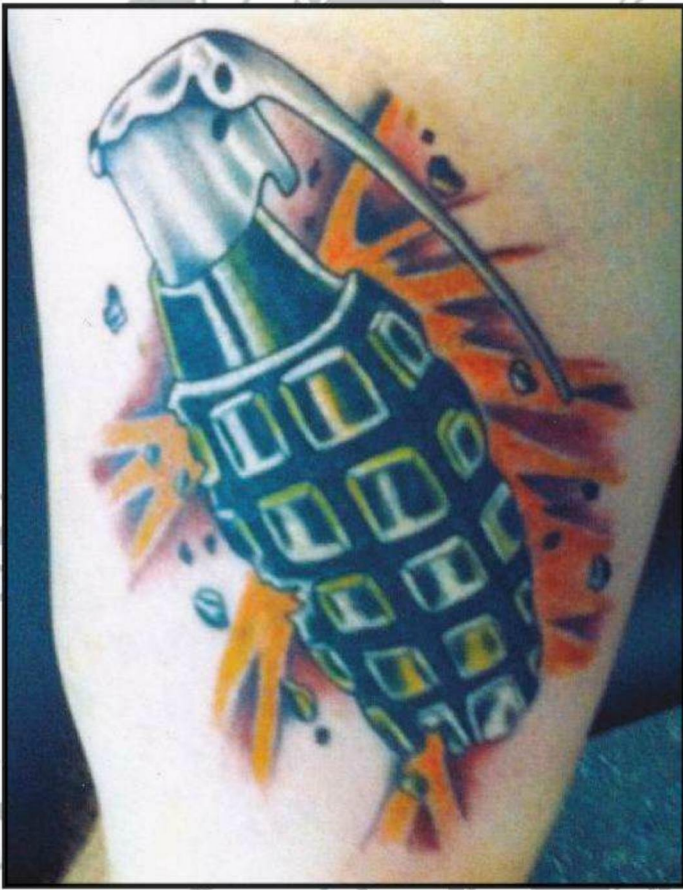
AJ Ludlow, Royal Street Tattoo
Mobile, AL



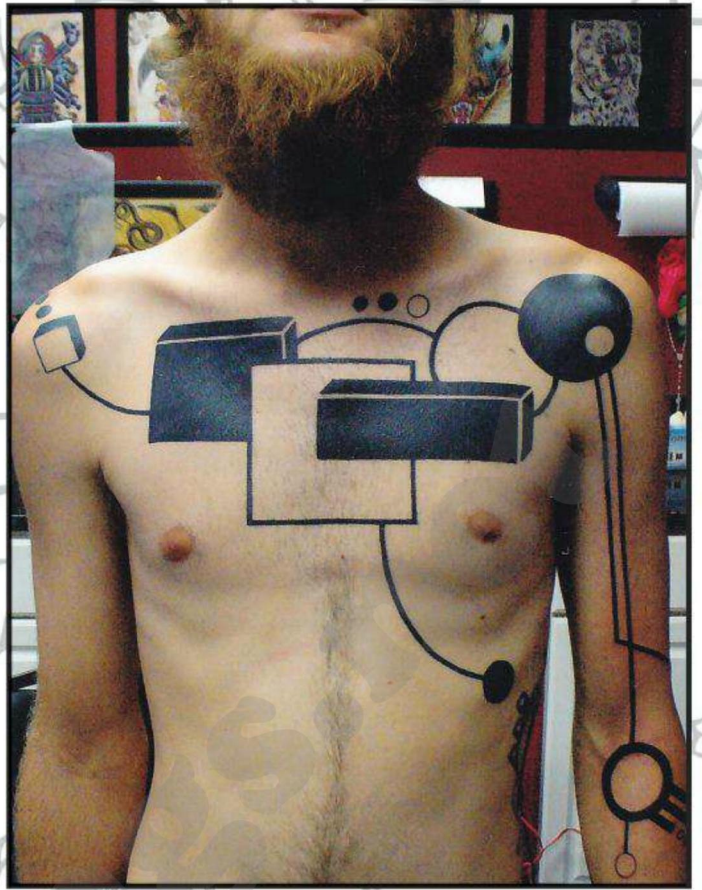
Lady Redz, X2 Ink
Germantown, MD



Ben Reese, No Regrets Tattoo
Memphis, TN



*Lil Ant, Visible Ink Tattoo Studio
Malden, MA*



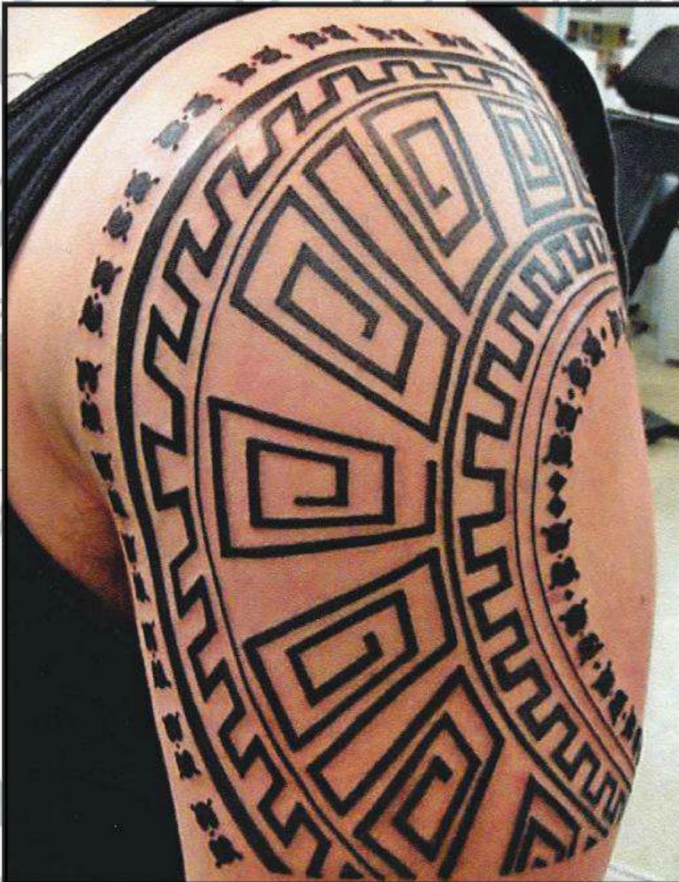
*Pony, Royal Street Tattoo
Mobile, AL*



*Pony, Royal Street Tattoo
Mobile, AL*



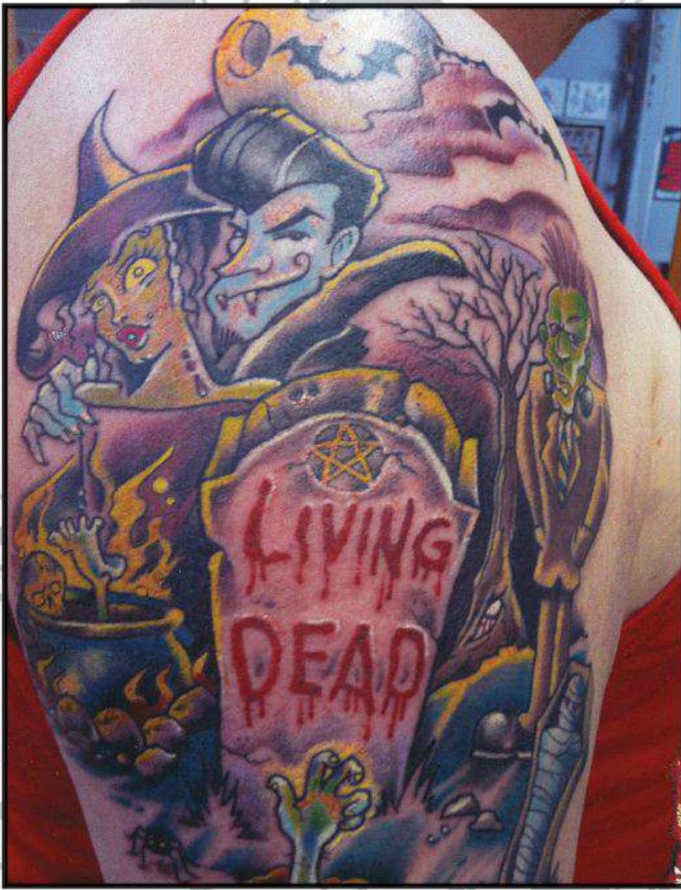
John Sunseri, Empire Tattoo
Upland, CA



John Bush
Sioux City, IA



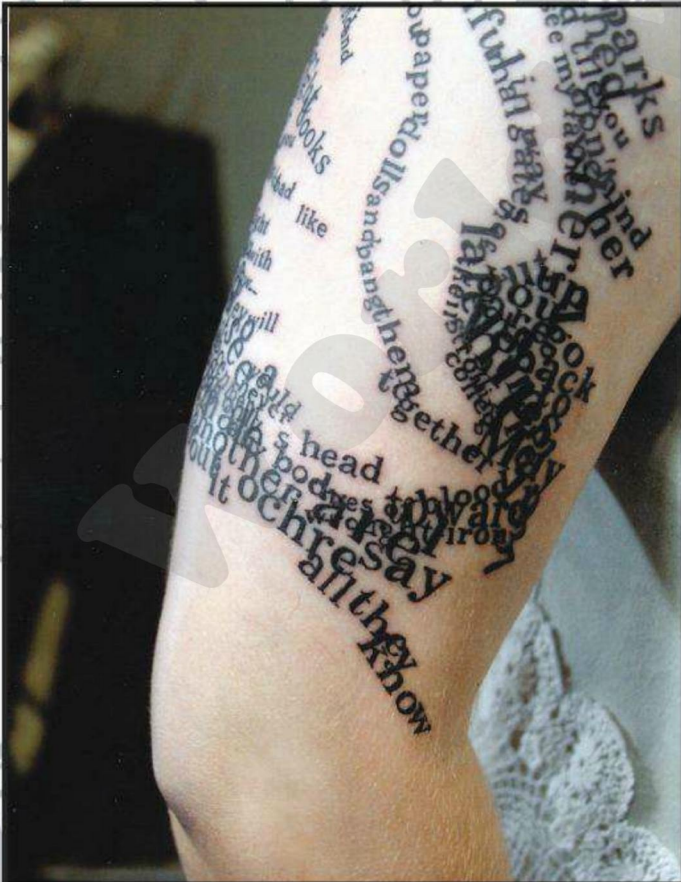
Giovanni Barletta, Joh Tattoo
Montreal, Quebec, Canada



*Lisa Strange, Strange Daze Tattoos
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*Robbie, Baldy's Tattoo Studio
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*Shawn Hebrank, Identity Tattoo
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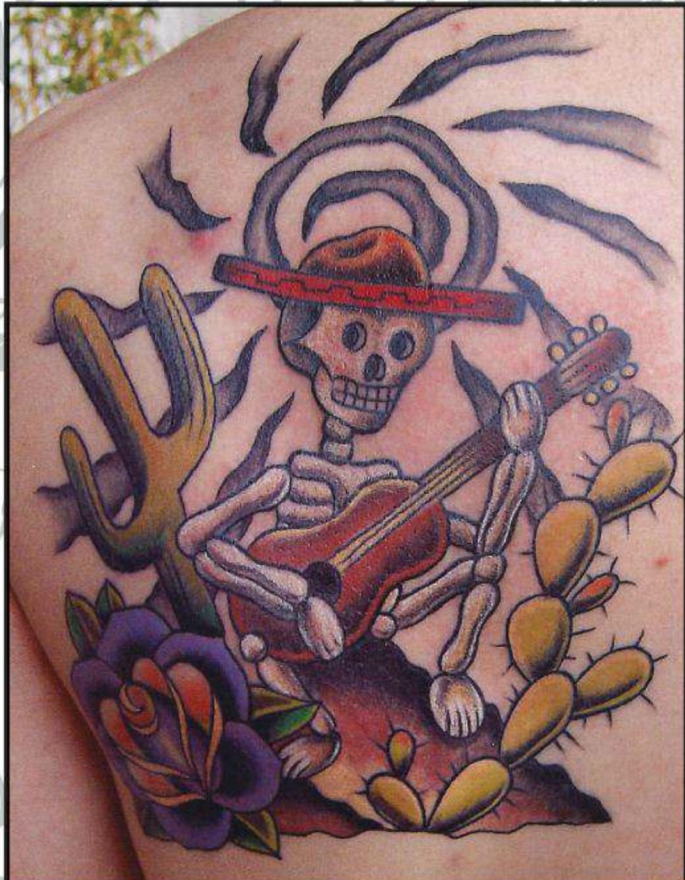
*Jesse Neese, Nuclear Ink Custom Tattoo
Omaha, NE*



*Matt Doherty, Mystic Eye Tattoo
Turnersville, NJ*



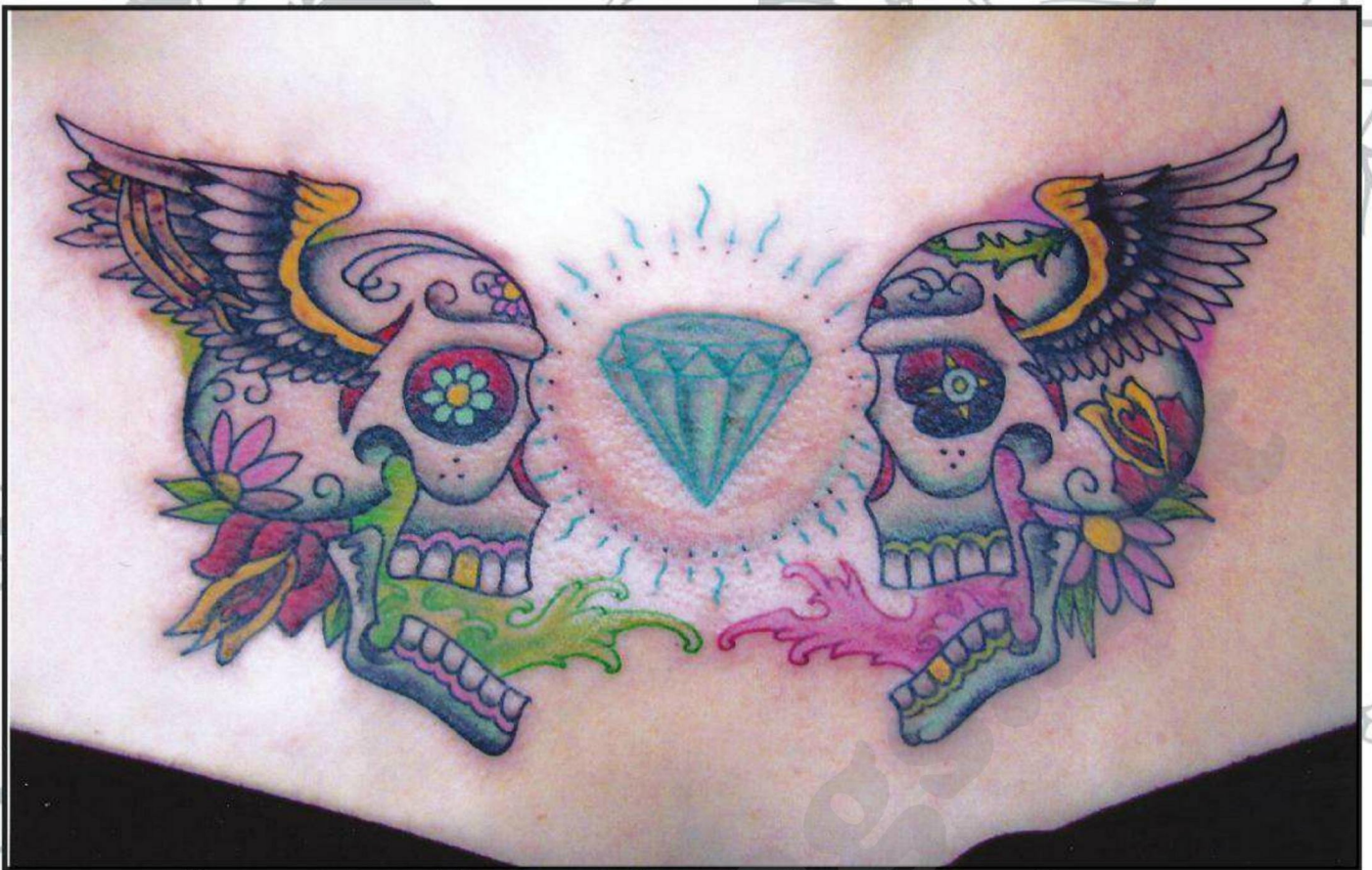
*Michael Bolerjack, Grafic Ink Tattoo Studio
Kenner, LA*



*Jeremiah Beshears, Integrity Tattoo
San Jose, CA*



*Rich Velez, Painted Lady
Harrisonburg, VA*



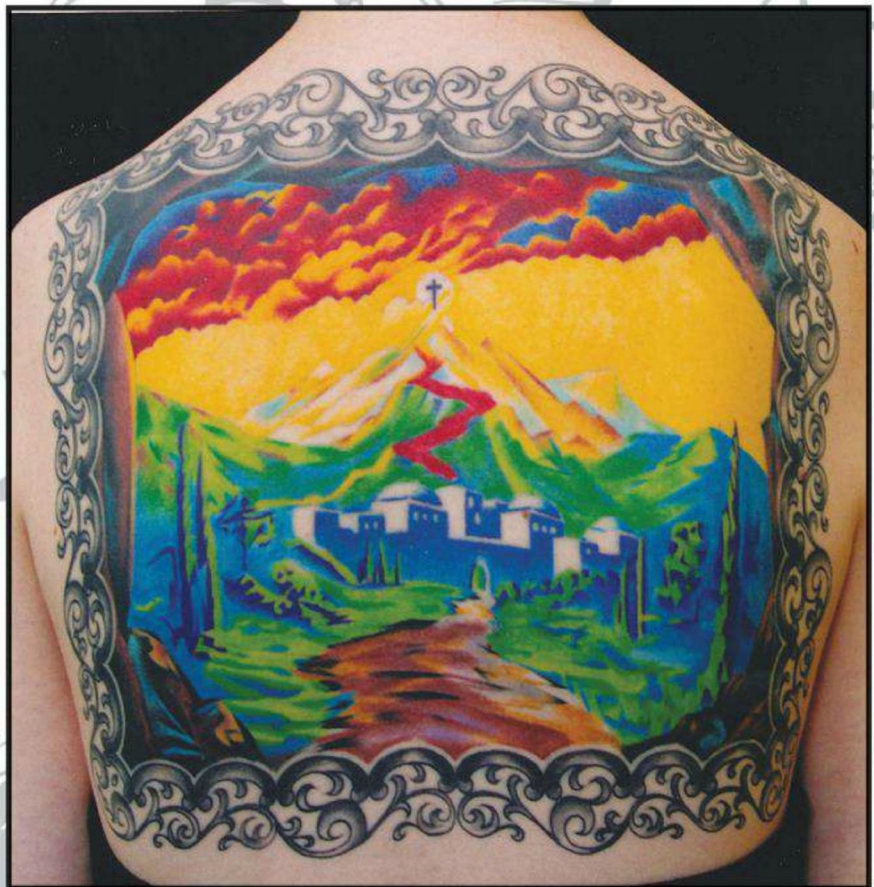
Marcus Dove, Smiling Buddha Tattoos
Savannah, GA



Glenn Dillenger, Studio 42
Beaver Falls, PA



Taylor Mills,, Wizard's World 2
Birdsboro, PA



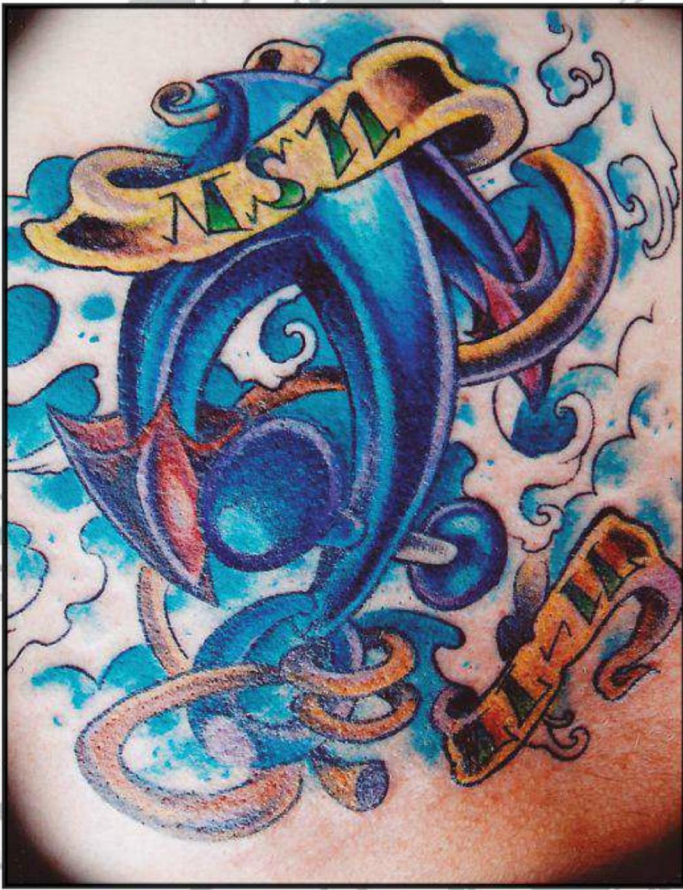
Megan Hoogland, Cactus Tattoo
Mankato, MN



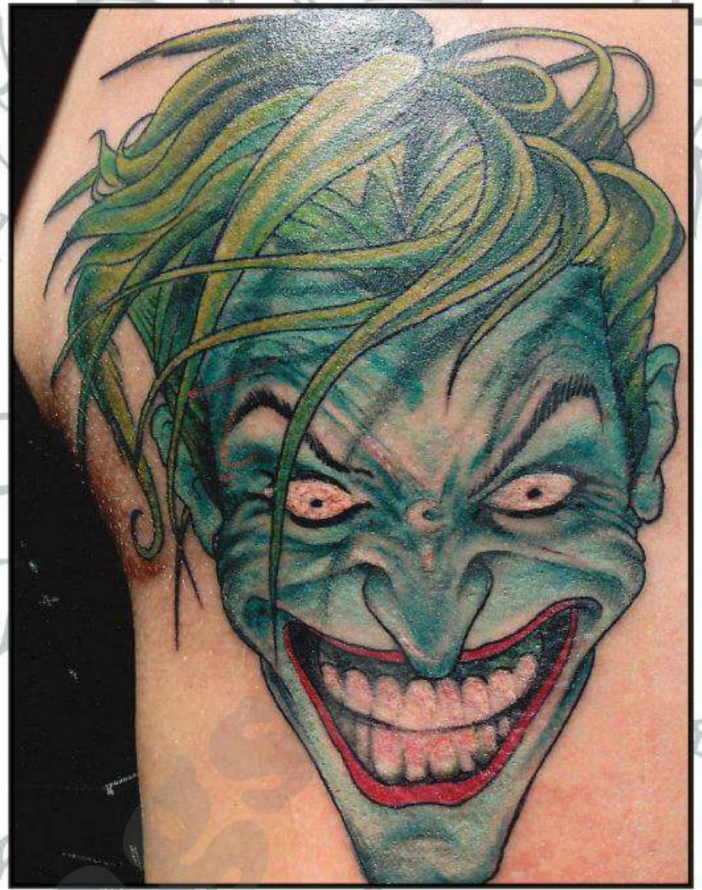
Wendell Frazier, Sure-Fire Tattoos
Lynwood, IL



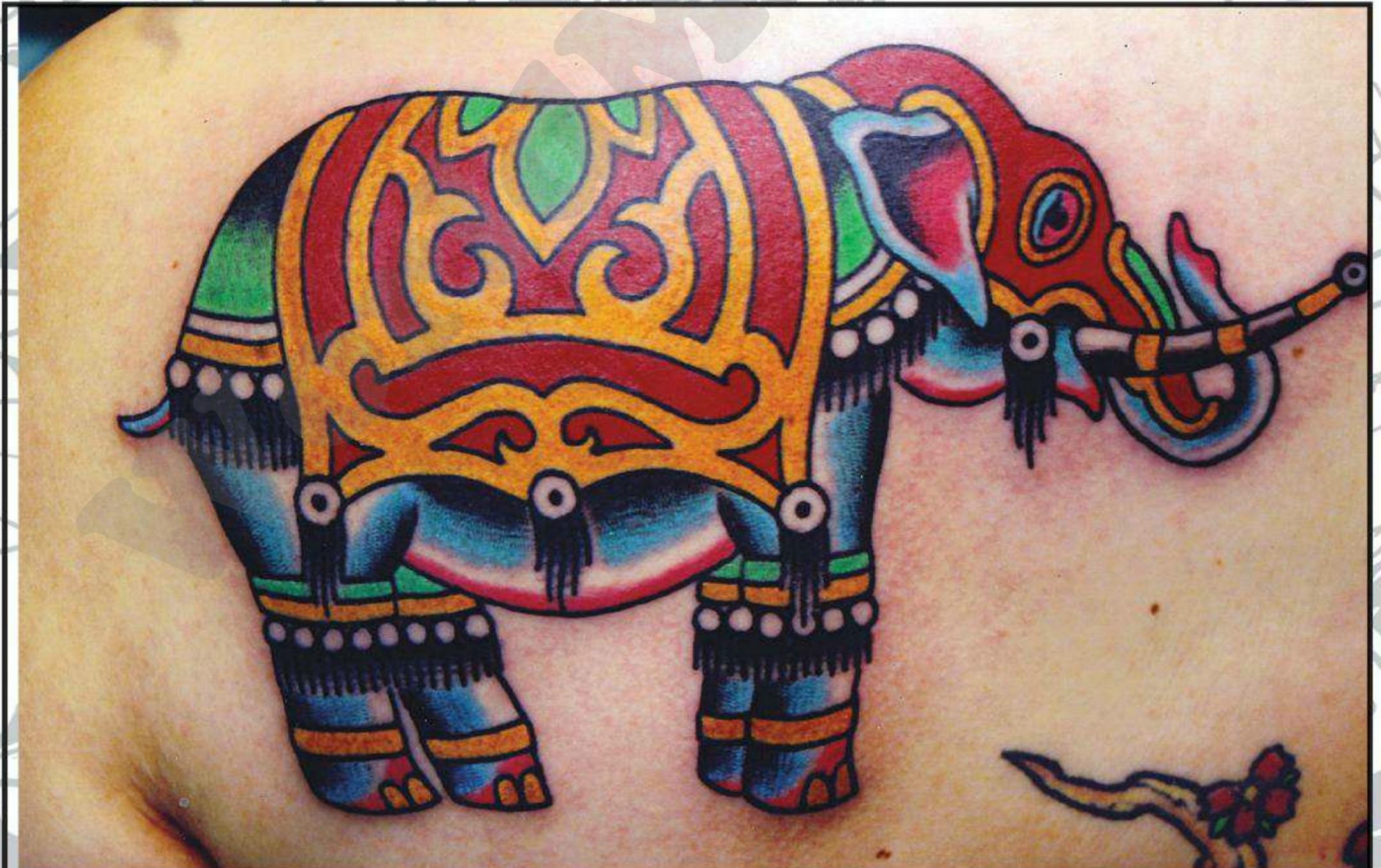
Wendell Frazier, Sure-Fire Tattoos
Lynwood, IL



Aaron Maher, Dead Rockstar
Bismarck, ND



Cavellucci, Freak Shop
Faro, Portugal



Ben Fiedler, Resurrection Tattoo
Austin, TX



Vincent Moisdon, Colorfast Studios
Coral Springs, FL



Ben Fiedler, Resurrection Tattoo
Austin, TX



Ben Fiedler, Resurrection Tattoo
Austin, TX



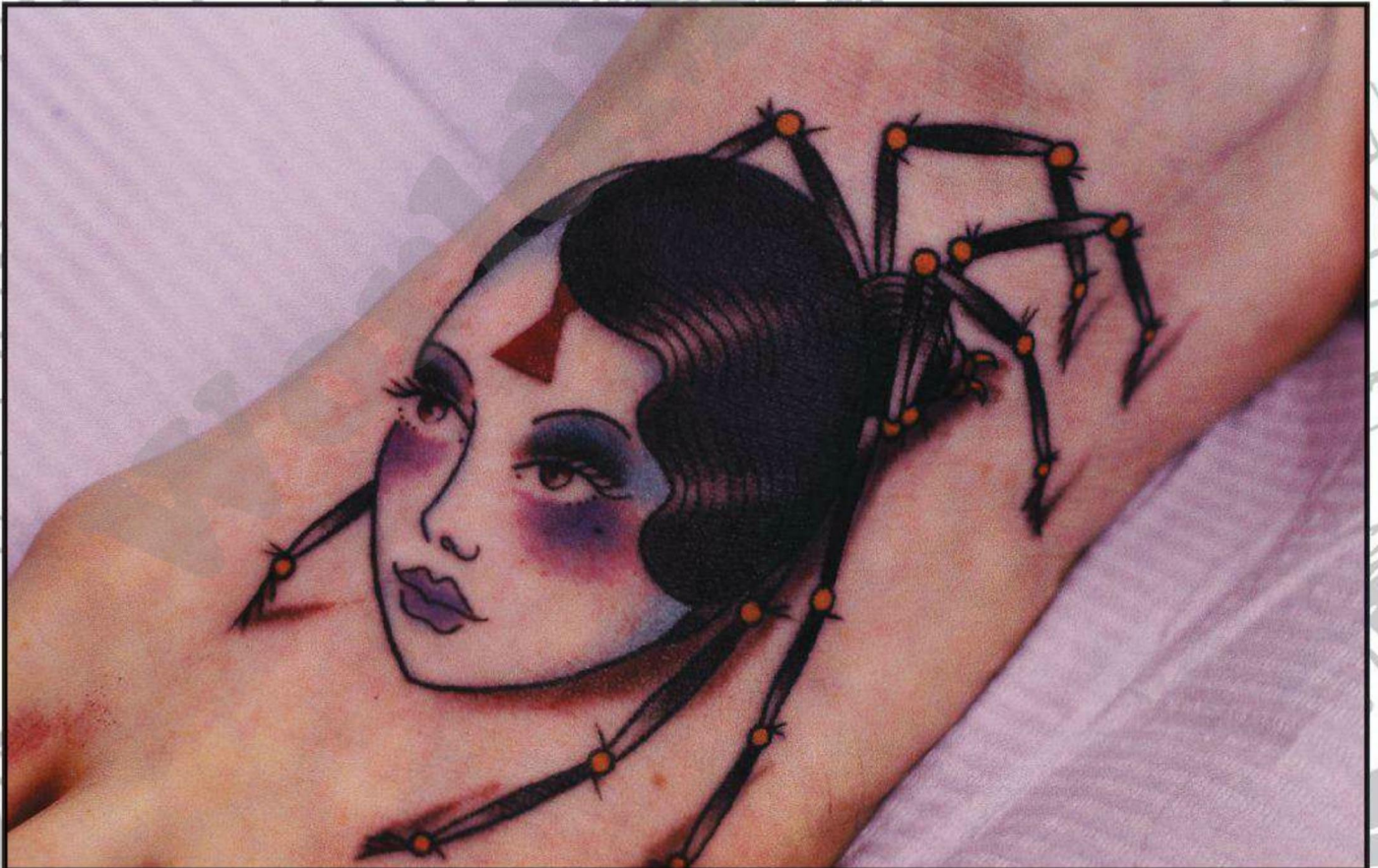
Ben Reese, No Regrets Tattoo Emporium
Memphis, TN



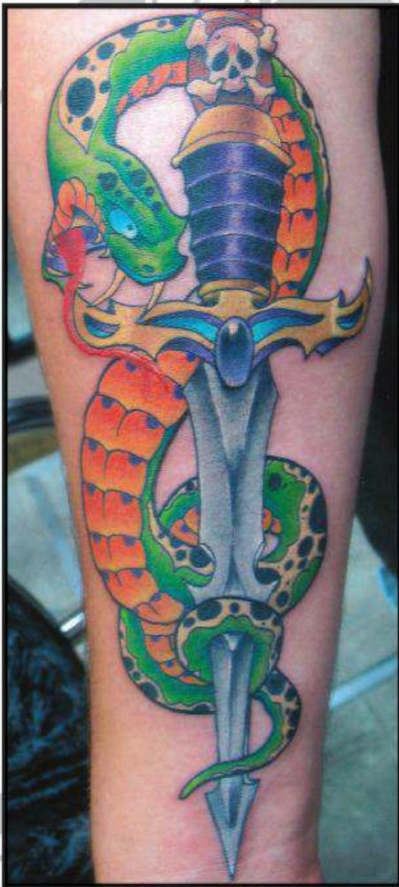
Adam Jeffrey, Baltimore Tattoo Museum
Baltimore, MD



Rachel Helmich, Maui Tattoo Co.
Kihei, HI



Jason Donahue, Idle Hand
San Francisco, CA



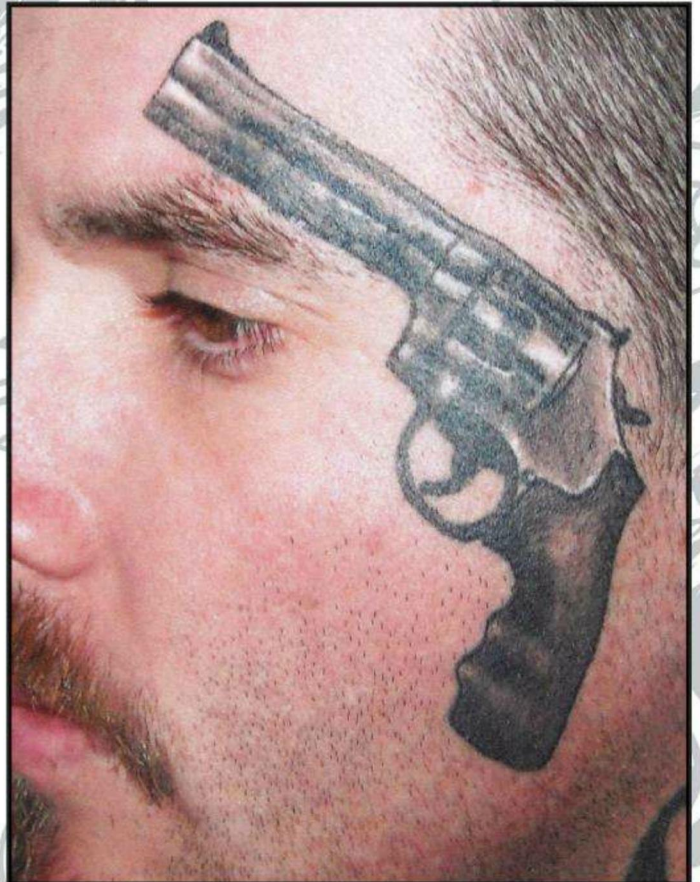
Taylor Mills, Wizard's World 2
Birdsboro, PA



John Sunseri, Empire Tattoo
Upland, CA



Aaron Maher, Dead Rockstar
Bismarck, ND



John Bush,
Sioux City, IA



Chad Sinkhorn, Studio Ink Tattoo
Danville, KY



Darcy Nutt, Chalice Tattoo Studio
Boise, ID



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Portland, OR



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Beaver Falls, PA



Mikey Sarratt, High Noon Tattoo
Phoenix, AZ



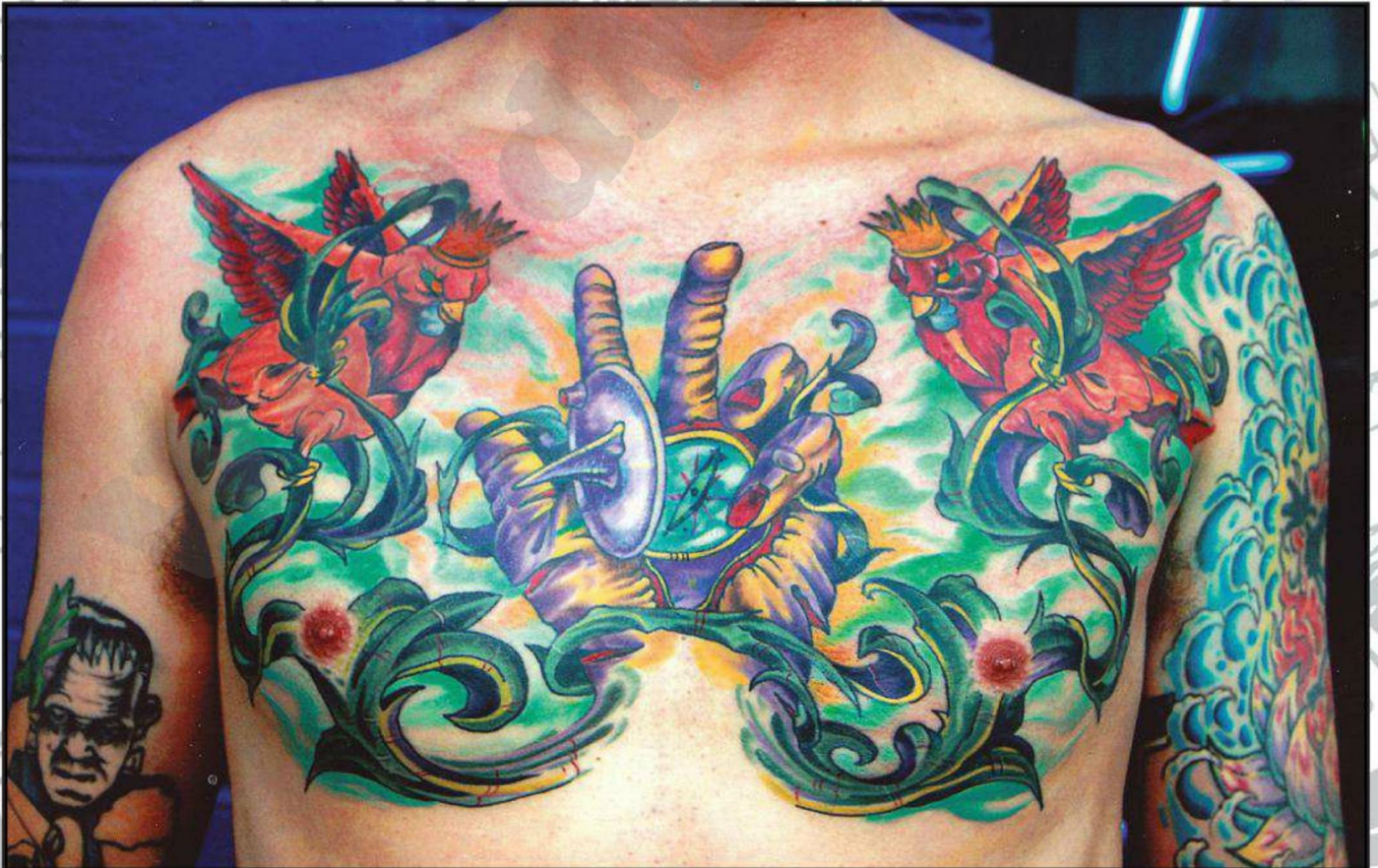
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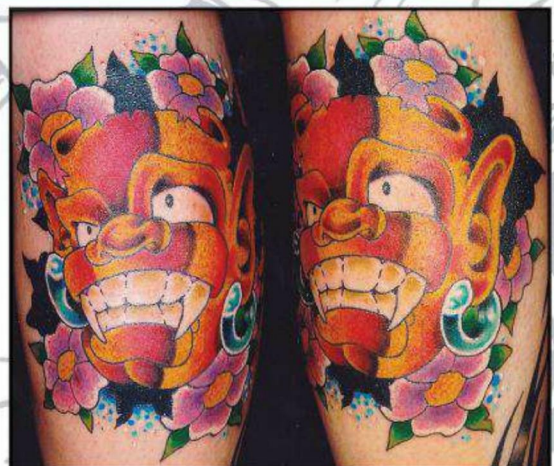
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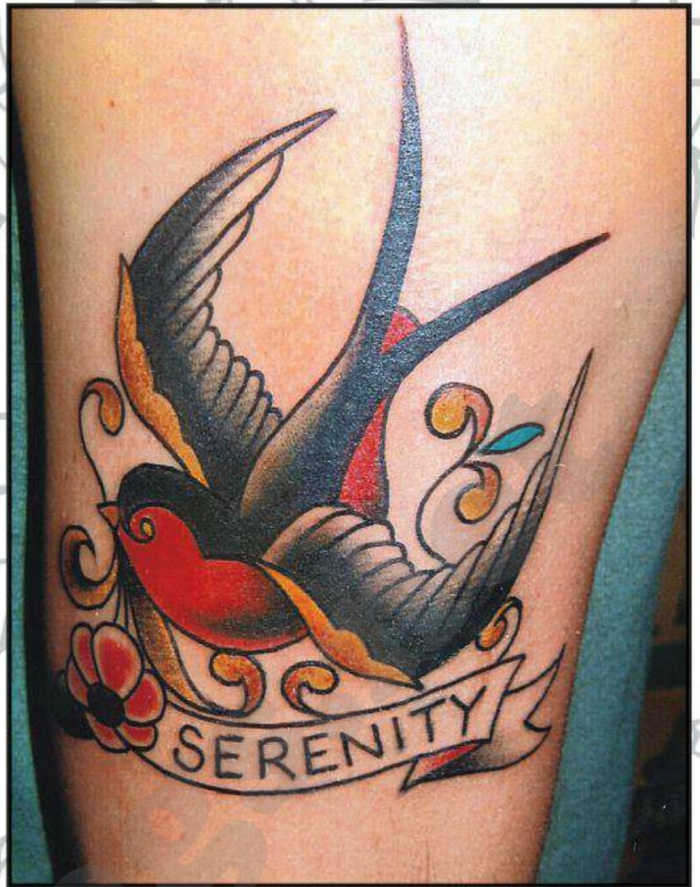
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Napa, CA



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Portland, OR*



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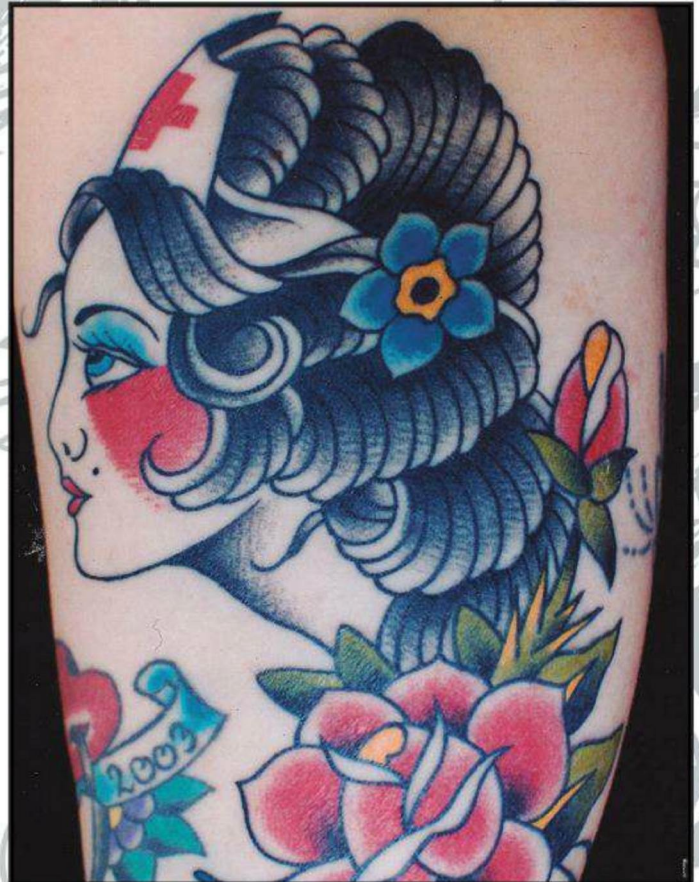
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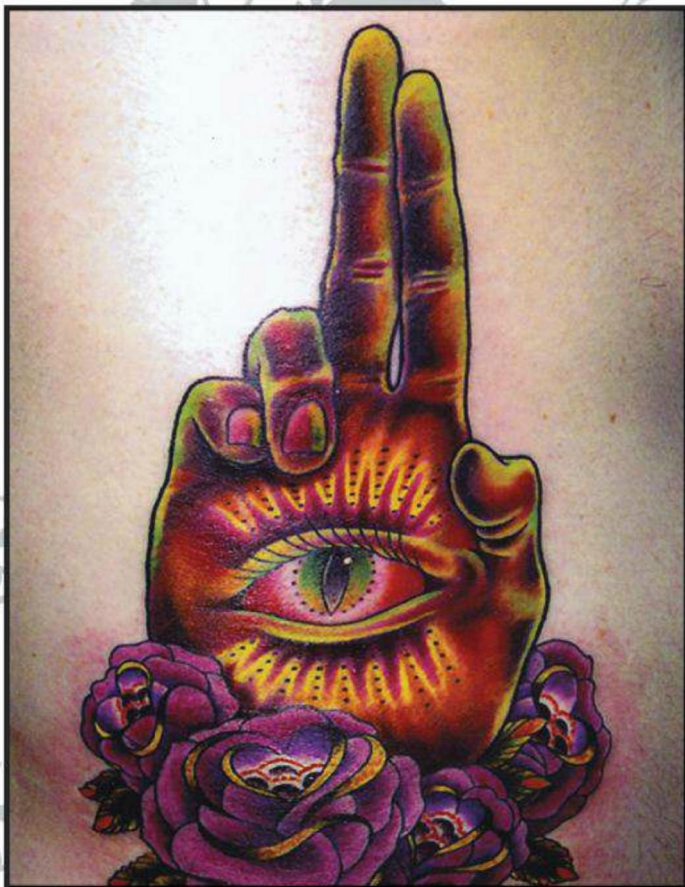
Aviv Rotshas, Pyscho Tattoo
Tel-Aviv, Israel



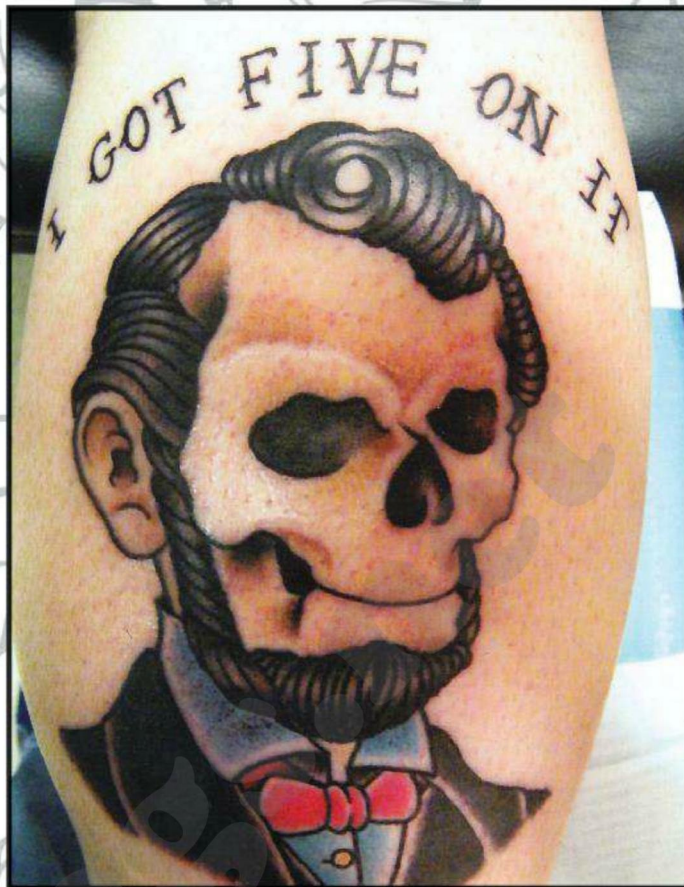
John Sunseri, Empire Tattoo
Upland, CA



Sebastiaan, King of Kings Tattoo
Swalmen, Holland



Aviv Rotshas, Pyscho Tattoo
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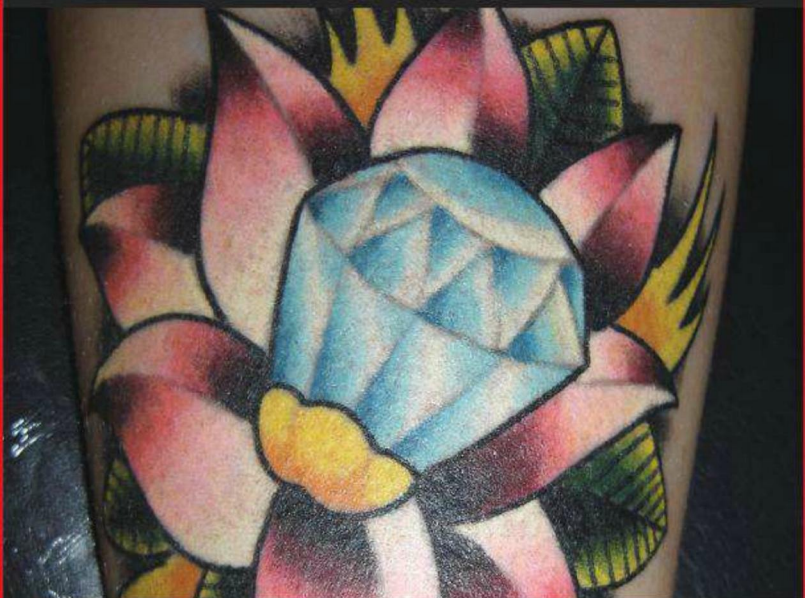
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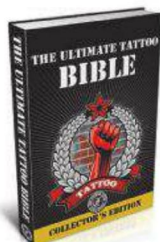
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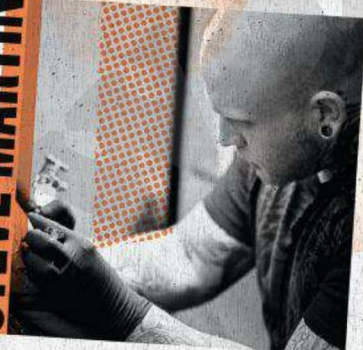
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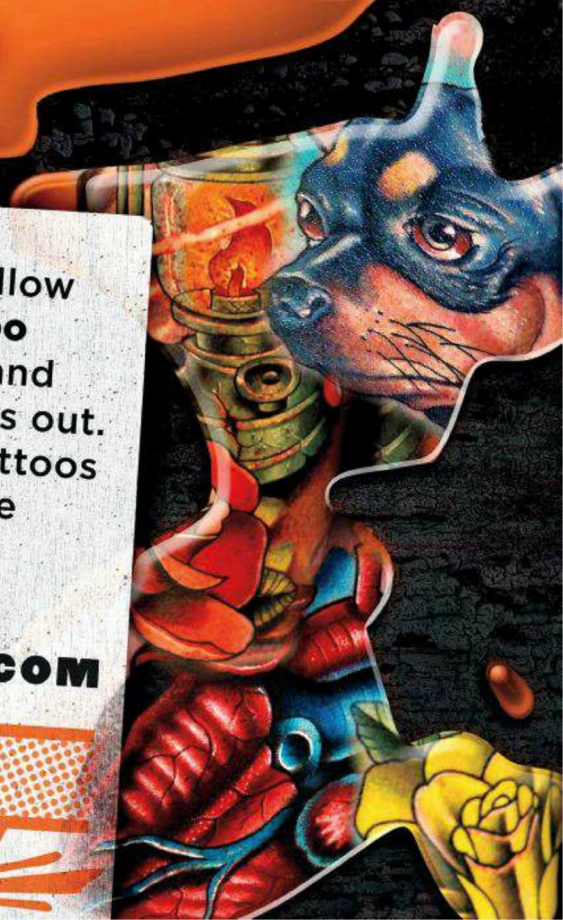


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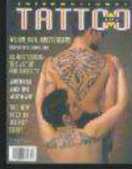
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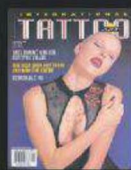
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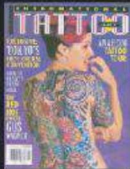
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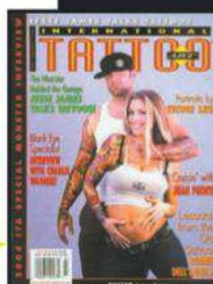
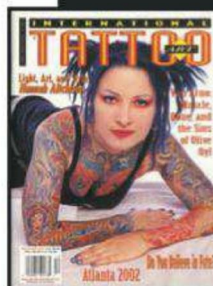
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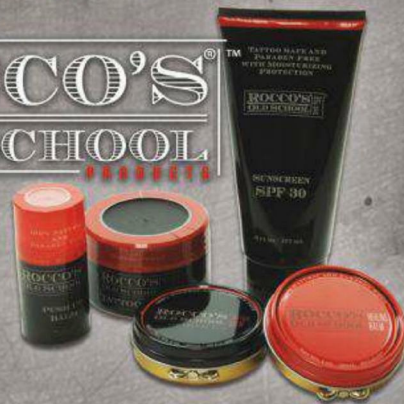
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